

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Annual Report

Presented: January 18, 2018



Annual Report

Presented:
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Overview and
Programs

Budgets

Strategic Plan

Board of Directors

Annual Outcomes

College Success
Program

Other Initiatives

JMG in the News



Board Approved Budget for Period of July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017

#	REVENUE	FY17 Budget
1	DOE - STATE APPROPRIATION	3,195,379
2	DHHS	418,500
3	LOCAL SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS	1,811,000
4	PRIVATE & GRANT DEVELOPMENT GOAL	2,119,440
5	FINANCIAL LITERACY GRANT	500,000
6	ALL OTHER	<u>10,000</u>
7	TOTAL REVENUE	8,054,319
	EXPENSE	
8	SALARIES	5,170,084
9	BENEFITS	<u>1,272,875</u>
10	SUBTOTAL: SALARIES & BENEFITS	6,442,959
11	PARTNER EXPENSES	822,863
12	TRAVEL	107,975
13	CERTIFICATION & MEMBERSHIPS	28,400
14	TRAINING	92,607
15	SUPPLIES	30,632
16	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	32,500
17	STUDENT CONFERENCES & ACTIVITIES	68,282
18	CENTRAL OFFICE	<u>428,099</u>
19	TOTAL EXPENSE	8,054,319
20	NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)	0

Jobs for Maine's Graduates, Inc.
OPERATING BUDGET

REVENUE	JMG FY18
ME DOE - State Appropriation	3,545,379
ME DHHS	1,186,000
Local School Contributions	1,759,500
Private Development Goal	1,989,558
<u>FINLIT Grant</u>	<u>300,000</u>
Total Revenue	8,780,437
<u>EXPENSE</u>	
Salaries	5,517,972
Benefits	1,471,558
Subtotal Personnel	<u>6,989,529</u>
Partner Expenses	670,930
Travel Expenses	154,475
Training and Development	141,450
Supplies	40,875
Student Conferences and Activities	147,058
Central Office	336,120
<u>Strategic Growth Fund</u>	<u>300,000</u>
Total Expense	8,780,437
Net Revenue	<u>0</u>



JOBS FOR MAINE'S GRADUATES, INC.

2015-2020

Strategic Plan

Jobs for Maine’s Graduates, Inc.
Strategic Plan July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020
Adopted by the JMG Board of Directors on June 25, 2015

JMG’s mission is to identify students who face barriers to education, and to guide each one on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career, and productive adulthood.

Our vision is to be a champion for all Maine students facing barriers to education. We understand Maine's future will be a reflection of what we commit and contribute to our youth.

JMG’s strategic plan for 2015-2020 sets priorities and direction for the next five years, and is the culmination of an in-depth, year-long examination of best practices, emerging trends, and evolving organizational strengths and challenges – both existing and future.

Established in 1993, JMG will celebrate its 25th anniversary within the next five years. It’s interesting to note that in a recent study conducted by Richard Foster, a Yale University management professor and director of its Entrepreneurial Institute, the average lifespan of a Fortune 500 company, “has decreased by more than 50 years in the last century, from 67 years in the 1920s to just 20 years today.” The primary reason cited by Professor Foster? Linear thinking: “The companies are trying to protect what they haveat a time when the rate of change is increasing as fast as it is, within an ever-increasing complex world.”

With JMG’s mission clearly in focus, and with the constructive involvement of hundreds of stakeholders, this plan rests upon the strong foundation of an unwavering commitment to our core student-centered values.

We recognize continued success will require that we remain focused on our essential purpose, while seizing new opportunities to advance the success of students in Maine to the benefit of the state’s economy. As we look to the future, we seek to embrace innovation to drive forward mission-related impact. This will require JMG’s board and executive team to reach beyond programmatic solutions, seeking change at a systemic level within the environments of education and workforce development.

This plan focuses on three strategic priorities:

- I. A commitment to staff and programmatic development to ensure long-term value and viability.
- II. Build JMG’s position as the premier, independent partner of student-centered education and career prep advancement.
- III. Establish an affiliated business structure.

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Strategic Plan Process Review

On December 5, 2013, JMG's Board of Directors participated in a day-long retreat to begin the strategic planning process. The "2020 Vision Retreat" was facilitated by consultant Gary Stern, and undertook a "What If?" scenario planning approach. Executive staff and several long-term board members provided historical information, background context and trend analysis. These included a 20-year illustration of JMG's organizational growth, both from a programmatic and financial perspective, a review of JMG's tiers of service, an environmental scan of driving forces and critical uncertainties, and big-picture possibilities.

As a result of that retreat, and in support of strategic planning development, the board identified several calls to action and next steps to be completed, including but not limited to:

- A Board Skills Assessment
- A Board Skills Gap Analysis
- Establishment of a formal Board Recruitment Process via the Board Governance Standing Committee
- A directive to JMG's executive team to assess internal organizational structure and capacity
- The establishment of a Board Task Force to function as a short-term ad-hoc committee of both board and non-board members to explore the business infrastructure of JMG, with an objective to study, analyze and recommend a corporate structure for JMG that would allow it to build upon new business opportunities in its role as an RSO, or resource support organization.

The board also identified several key priorities to be explored and incorporated into the new strategic planning process. Including, but not limited to:

- Developing and diversifying funding sources
- Facilitate the growth of corporate partnerships
- Align board committees with strategy
- Strategic structural alignment (internal and external/RSO)
- Support the change process within strategy
- Balancing growth with financial prudence

Throughout the 2014 calendar year, a major portion of each full board meeting was dedicated to the strategic planning process, including informational dialogue with JMG's operations team, JMG Regional Managers and Specialists, several presentations from external stakeholders to provide a comprehensive environmental scan of trends and issues within education, workforce development and nonprofit business sectors, and honored student speakers who shared their experiences within the JMG program.

JMG's executive team collaborated with Jim Mahan of Vitalworks to begin an extensive review of the organization's internal structure, department functions and individual roles and responsibilities. CEO Craig Larrabee and Executive Vice President Kim Lipp participated in more than sixty (60) hours of professional development and follow-up assignments geared toward skill building for leading a change process.

This work was ultimately extended to JMG's full executive team and central office support staff. In the fall of 2014, JMG's executive and central office staff participated in a retreat with Jim Mahan to begin the process of best aligning JMG's internal resources to support the vision being created through the development of the 2015-2020 strategic plan. A JMG Organizational Development Plan was created, including a timeline and series of action steps that combine a series of functional assessments with individual reflections. All of JMG's executive and central office job descriptions are being reviewed and refined to build upon the team's existing strengths, to better articulate individual accountability and empowerment, and to provide a better of understanding of where gaps exist and how we can best build capacity to fill those gaps.

Throughout this process, JMG's widespread frontline experts were consulted regularly. Many strategic planning sessions were held with JMG's Regional Managers, Master Specialists and members of the JMG Executive Council – this is a ten-member group of Specialists whom have sought out a leadership role to serve as advisors and liaisons to better connect JMG's executive/central office team with field operations. All Specialists were engaged in the strategic planning process, as each regional meeting hosted a Strategic Planning session. JMG divides its programs/Specialists into three regions: North, Central and South.

As this strategic plan has been developed, several external stakeholders have been consulted throughout the process by members of JMG's board and Executive Team. These include leaders from government, public education, business, higher education, private foundations, corporate foundations, family foundations, non-profit leaders, consultants, and workforce development experts. JMG's CEO Craig Larrabee has also been consulting and exchanging key areas of development with the executive team of Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), as JAG is concurrently developing a new long-term strategic plan.

Strategic Priorities: 2015 - 2020

- I. A commitment to staff and programmatic development to ensure long-term value and viability.

JMG's greatest asset is the strength of its professional expertise and the quality of its programs. A major focus for the next five years will be on investments in both to sustain and enhance the key components of JMG's organizational excellence.

Our objectives include the following:

- a. Invest in both proven and new initiatives to advance professional development and skill attainment, supporting a healthy and robust culture of shared success.
- b. Align systems and resources to ensure integrity and accountability, while maximizing innovation, flexibility and responsiveness to threats and opportunities.
- c. Ensure systems of compensation/benefits continue to be competitive and inventive; and, HR policies and procedures are best-in-class and supportive of organizational goals.

Strategic Priorities: 2015 – 2020

II. Build JMG's position as the premier, independent partner of student-centered education and career prep advancement.

Collaboration, communication and outreach to the broader community are critical to the achievement of JMG's mission. We will invest new energy and resources in capturing and telling the JMG story, expanding efforts to promote and publicize our core values, dynamic programs, and extraordinary student-centered approach.

Our objectives include the following:

- a. Deepen the development of students of promise through collaboration with strong partners who are equally dedicated to actively supporting students in their journey to becoming dynamic citizens who will lead Maine to a vibrant and global economy.
- b. Create a multiyear integrated development and communications plan, addressing internal and external audiences, to secure resources and investments from key stakeholders.
- c. Examine issues of programmatic sustainability while continuing to design, develop, and refine programs that reflect developmental understanding, engages students in pursuing their aspirations, and helps build connections among public education, private business, and higher education.

Strategic Priorities: 2015 – 2020

III. Establish an affiliated business structure.

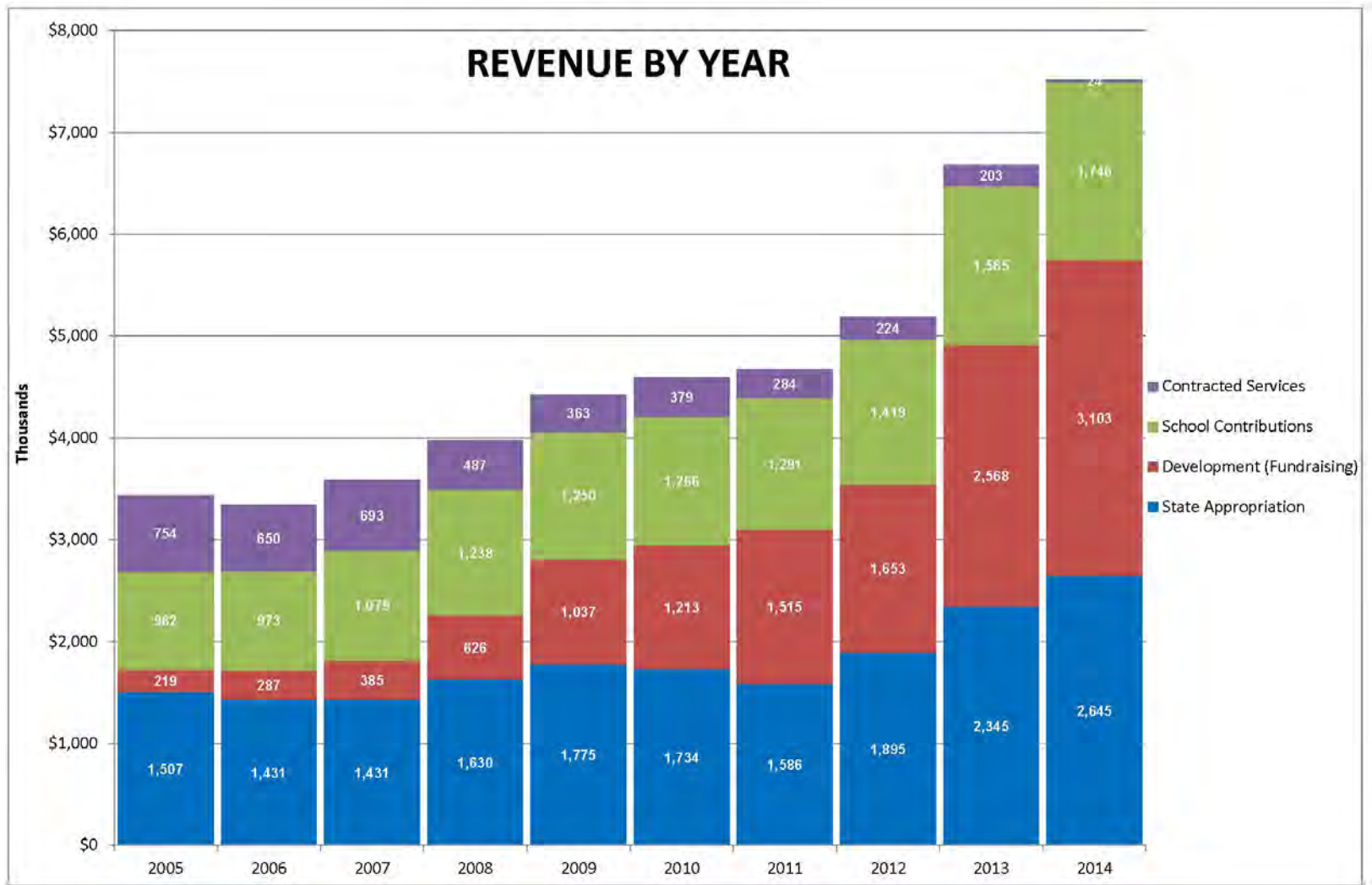
An umbrella organization providing board oversight and executive, administrative and strategic leadership with the capacity to operate affiliated nonprofit organization(s) will allow JMG to harness new opportunities and expand its position and reach. This structure opens up new possibilities for funding resources to deliver on mission-related advancement, and increases opportunities for innovation and measured risks to ensure programmatic relevancy, while creating new revenue streams to sustain core programs.

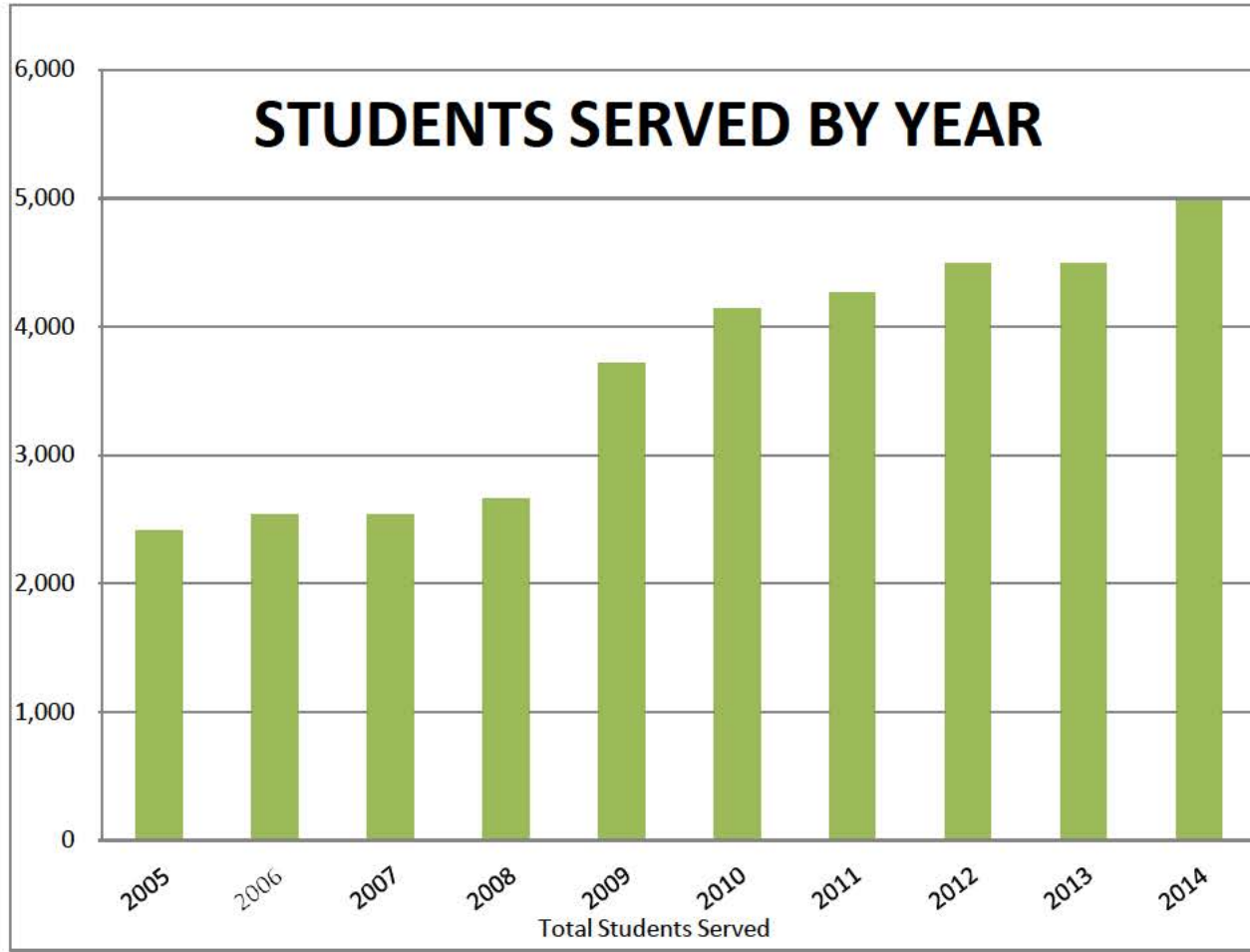
Our objectives include the following:

- a. Expand JMG's role as a provider of technical support, ranging from best-in-class administrative functions to programmatic knowledge-transfer, to other organizations within the marketplace of nonprofit leadership, education, and workforce development.
- b. Effectively capture and articulate JMG's brand to elevate what we stand for, the promise we make, and the values we convey.
- c. Leverage JMG's Strategic Growth Fund to make initial investments in the start-up phase of a new affiliate business structure, with the expectation that the new business model will ultimately generate revenue back to the core JMG organization.

JMG's Operational and Budgetary Trends

	Fiscal Year 2006	Fiscal Year 2010	Fiscal Year 2013	Current Fiscal Year 2015	Change from 2006 - 2015
Total Operating Budget	\$3,272,039	\$4,625,022	\$6,987,579	\$7,630,475	↑133%
State Appropriation	\$1,431,266	\$1,775,266	\$2,345,379	\$2,645,379	↑85%
Total Private/Grant Contributions	\$305,000	\$1,145,000	\$2,895,200	\$3,024,096	↑892%
Percentage of budget/private	9%	25%	41%	40%	↑344%
Total Spent on "Development"	\$176,559	\$276,811	\$313,082	\$256,893	↑45%
Development ROI Ratio	\$1 to \$1.72	\$1 to \$4.14	\$1 to \$9.24	\$1 to \$11.77	↑584%(\$10.05)
JMG's Indirect Rate	17%	17%	17%	16%	↓6%
Central Office Staff (includes Executives)	10	11	12	9	↓10%
JMG Executive Staff Members	5	5	7	5	No change
JMG Specialists/Managers	51	69	76	87	↑71%
Specialists' Starting Salary	\$27,000	\$30,000	\$31,000	\$31,500	↑17%
Specialists' Average Compensation	\$31,300	\$37,762	\$38,132	\$39,189	↑25%
Specialists' Highest Compensation	\$41,382	\$47,824	\$53,207	\$56,271	↑36%
Professional Development Budget	\$27,650	\$34,500	\$46,791	\$55,000	↑99%
Average Per Site Direct Costs	\$43,629	\$55,085	\$58,009	\$59,066	↑35%
Average School Contribution	\$19,000	\$22,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	↑26%
Core High school programs	36	44	48	49	↑ 36%
Core Middle school programs	14	17	18	15	↑ 7%
Hybrid programs	0	3	7	15	↑ 400%
JMG programs offering "Plus" services	3	16	23	22	↑633%
Total students served	2,000	4,100	4,650	5,150	↑ 158%
Senior Graduation Rate	96%	96%	96%	96%	No change
Four-Year Graduation Rate	Not yet tracked	92%	92%	92%	No change
In-School Retention Rate	96%	97%	97%	97%	↑ 1%
2 & 4 Year Degree Enrollment	47%	47%	48%	47%	No change
Continued Education Rate	Not yet tracked	52%	54%	53%	↑ 2%
JMG Fund Balance	\$197,286	\$320,530	\$56,594	\$85,559	n/a
JMG Board Designated Capacity Fund	Did not exist	\$587,000	\$428,949	\$558,028	n/a
JMG Board Designated Healthcare Reserve Fund	Did not exist	Did not exist	Did not exist	\$140,300	n/a
JMG Board Designated Endowment	Did not exist	Did not exist	\$600,000	\$1,000,000	n/a
JMG Board Designated Working Capital	Did not exist	Did not exist	\$500,000	\$500,000	n/a





Summary of Environmental Scan Trends & Data

MAINE STATISTICS – GENERAL

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News, September 19, 2014

“Word Search in the race for governor: Waiting to hear about what really matters in Maine”

- Maine now has more deaths than births.
- It has the oldest median age in the country at 43.5 years.
- Maine will lose 20,000 workers by 2020.

SOURCE: Maine Department of Education, 2013

Not graduating on time - State Average 14%*

Androscoggin 22%	Hancock 17%	Oxford 16%	Somerset 16%
Aroostook 12%	Kennebec 14%	Penobscot 13%	Waldo 12%
Cumberland 12%	Knox 14%	Piscataquis 16%	Washington 11%
Franklin 11%	Lincoln 17%	Sagadahoc 17%	York 10%

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation Release, 2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book

“Maine Improves in Education and Falls Behind in Economic Well-being”

Economic Well-Being: Maine fell behind in three of the four indicators that comprise this domain. Maine ranks 29th in this domain.

- Lack of parental employment: Over one-third of Maine children now live in households where parents lack full-time, year-round employment.
- Child poverty: In 2012, 54,000 Maine children (21 percent) lived in poverty, defined as a family of four (two parents/two kids) with income below \$23,283. In 1990, nearly 40,000 children (13 percent) lived in poverty.
- Housing costs: Additionally in 2012, 96,000 Maine children (36 percent) lived in households with high housing cost burdens (spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing), up significantly from 77,000 children (25 percent) in 1990.
- Disconnected youth: In 2012, 5,000 or 8 percent of Maine teens ages 16 to 19 were not working and not in school - also referred to as "disconnected youth." This indicator has remained relatively unchanged since 2008.

Education: Maine showed improvement on all four of the indicators that measure this domain. Maine ranks 14th in this domain.

- Preschool enrollment: An estimated 44 percent of Maine's three and four year olds were enrolled in preschool, up from 40 percent five years ago.
- Reading proficiency: With 37 percent of Maine's 4th graders proficient in reading in 2013 (up from 32 percent in 2005), Maine ranks 18th in the nation on this indicator. Nationally, 34 percent of 4th graders were proficient in reading in 2013, up from 30 percent in 2005.
- Math scores: Maine made significant improvement in 8th grade math scores, with 40 percent of 8th graders proficient, up from 30 percent in 2005. Maine ranks 10th in the nation on this indicator.
- High school graduation rates: Maine showed significant improvement in the percentage of high school students graduating on time. In 2005-06, 76 percent of Maine high school students graduated on time; in 2011-12, that figure rose to 87 percent.

MAINE STATISTICS – GENERAL (*CONTINUED*)

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation Release, 2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book
“Maine Improves in Education and Falls Behind in Economic Well-being”

Health: Maine earned its highest marks within the health domain, showing improvement on all four indicators. Maine ranks 3rd in this domain.

- Access to health care: In 2012, most of Maine's children had access to medical care and preventative services because 95 percent had health insurance coverage. However, 12,000 Maine children still lacked health benefits. In 1990, approximately 30,000 Maine children (10 percent) were uninsured.
- Low birth weight: A baby born weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) is considered low birth weight. Between 2005 and 2012, the percentage of low birth weight babies born in Maine decreased from 6.8 percent to 6.6 percent of live births. Nationally, 8.0 percent of babies were born low birth weight in 2012, down from 8.2 percent in 2005. Maine ranks 8th in the nation on this indicator.
- Child & teen death rate: In 2010, Maine's child and teen death rate was 27 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19, down from 2005 when the rate was 32 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19.
- Teens and substance use: In 2012, 6,000 or 6 percent of Maine teens reported that they abused or were dependent on alcohol or drugs during the last year. This represents a 45 percentage decrease from 2005-2006, when 11,000 or 11 percent of teens reported substance abuse or dependence. Maine ranks second in the nation on this indicator.

Family/Community Context: Maine ranked 6th in this domain, but showed improvement on only one of the four indicators.

- Parental education: Higher levels of parental education are strongly associated with better outcomes for children. Maine ranks 4th on this indicator, with 7 percent of Maine children living in households headed by an adult without a high school diploma, compared to 15 percent nationally.
- Teen birth rate: Between 2005 and 2012, Maine's teen birth rate decreased significantly from 24 births to 19 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19. The national teen birth rate decreased during the same time, but remains significantly higher than Maine's at 29 births per 1,000 females in this age group. Maine ranks 6th on this indicator.
- Single-parenting: In 2012, 85,000 or 34 percent of Maine children lived in single-parent families, a significant increase from 31 percent in 2005 and 20 percent in 1990.
- Concentrated poverty: Concentrated poverty is defined as neighborhoods where the poverty rate of the total population is 30 percent or more. During the period 2008-2012, 9,000 Maine children (3 percent) lived in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, up from 3,000 Maine children (1 percent) in 2000. Nationally, 13 percent of children lived in high poverty neighborhoods.

MAINE STATISTICS – K THROUGH 12

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News, September 19, 2014

“Word Search in the race for governor: Waiting to hear about what really matters in Maine”

- Between the 2006-07 and 2013-14 school years, Maine public school enrollment dropped by more than 15,000 students.

SOURCE: ReadyNation, Maine Skills Gap Report

- According to the Nation’s Report Card, only 40 percent of Maine 8th graders are proficient in math, 38 percent are proficient in reading and 37 percent are proficient in science.
- 14 percent of Maine high school freshmen do not graduate within four years.
- Forty-eight percent of Maine students in 2012-2013 scored proficient in math, and only 44 percent were proficient in writing, 49 percent in reading, and 41 percent in science.

MAINE STATISTICS – COLLEGE

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News, September 19, 2014

“Word Search in the race for governor: Waiting to hear about what really matters in Maine”

- The declining numbers of high school students in Maine is also applying financial pressure on the state’s university and community college systems.

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News, Nell Gluckman, September 26, 2014

“A whole different universe compared to high school: Deer Isle-Stonington program aims to boost college retention”

- In 2012, 38 percent of adults over age 25 in Maine had an associate degree or higher, which is about the same as the national figure, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Researchers have pointed to the cost of higher education, insufficient academic preparation in K-12 schools and a lack of aspiration among students.

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News, Nell Gluckman, August 4, 2014

“College enrollment rates are up in Maine; increase less significant in economically disadvantaged students.”

- Of the 13,171 students who graduated high school in Maine in 2013, 62.1 percent enrolled in college, compared to 56.9 percent of the 2006 graduates.
- The number of Maine students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price lunch steadily has been increasing the rate at which they enroll in college since 2008, from 66 percent to 72 percent. But students who qualify for the program — meaning their family’s income is at or below the federal poverty level — have not shown such gains, increasing in the rate at which they enroll in college from 45 percent to just 48 percent.

JMG SPECIFIC

SOURCE: Bangor Daily News Opinion, August 25, 2014

“Public Health, not Common Core, is the only effective solution for educational challenges.”

- The success of programs like Jobs for Maine’s Graduates offer proof that social and emotional issues play a major role in student success or failure.
- Six years after completing the program, JMG graduates, when compared with all other 22- to 24-year-olds, earned 14 percent more.

ENGAGEMENT – K THROUGH 12

SOURCE: Gallup Business Journal, April 10, 2014

According to 600,000 students surveyed, two drivers of success in the K-12 system:

- “Hope, engagement and a sense of well-being”
- “Having at least one teacher or other adult in the educational system that pays attention to them.”
- Only one-third of students believe they are “success ready” and hopeful for the future, either in higher education or in their future jobs and careers.
- Fully one-half “lack hope for the future.”
- Also all of those students who are not engaged and are not hopeful report that they are “much less” engaged in school over time than those who are.

SOURCE: Gallup Report, 2014

“State of America’s Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education”

The 2013 Gallup Student Poll found that participants who strongly agree with these two statements are 30 times as likely to be engaged at school as those who strongly disagree:

- “My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.”
- “I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.”

A 2009 Gallup study also found that teachers’ engagement levels are directly related to those of their students — and thereby to student achievement outcomes.

SOURCE: Gallup Business Journal, October 9, 2014

“Make a Difference. Show Students You Care”

- Student engagement in school drops precipitously from 5th grade through 12th grade.
- About three quarters of elementary school kids (76%) are engaged in school, while only 44% of high school kids are engaged.
- The longer students stay in school, the less engaged they become. If we were doing this right, the trend would be going in the exact opposite direction.
- About seven in 10 K-12 teachers are not engaged in their work (69%), and as a profession, teachers are dead last among all professions Gallup studied in saying their “opinions count” at work and their “supervisors create an open and trusting environment.”

ENGAGEMENT – COLLEGE

SOURCE: Gallup Business Journal, October 9, 2014

“Make a Difference. Show Students You Care”

- Employers of all shapes and sizes can make it a core mission to offer paid and unpaid internships to high school and college students.
- They can also offer externships for teachers and faculty, many of whom have never been in a work environment outside schools and academia.

- Education leaders of all kinds must recognize that their job is to foster teacher and faculty engagement, not just student engagement.

JOB PREPAREDNESS – K THROUGH 12

SOURCE: Gallup Business Journal, October 9, 2014

“Make a Difference. Show Students You Care”

- About four in 10 students in grades 5 through 12 (43%) say they “plan to start their own business,” yet only 7% currently have an internship or job in a real organization where they can apply that energy.
- News flash: Schools and colleges don’t have jobs and internships--employers do. If we don’t get schools and businesses working together to give students these opportunities, everyone will lose.

JOB PREPAREDNESS – COLLEGE

SOURCE: Gallup Business Journal, October 9, 2014

“Make a Difference. Show Students You Care”

- Business leaders say only 11% of college graduates are well prepared for success at work.
- 96% of chief academic officers of colleges and universities are either somewhat or very confident they are preparing college students for success in the workplace.
- Young Americans who “worked on a long-term project that took several classes to complete” and “used what [they] were learning about to develop solutions to real problems in [their] community or the world” in their last year of school were twice as likely to have higher work quality compared with those lacking these experiences. Yet only 17% said they had these experiences.

JOB PREPAREDNESS – MAINE

SOURCE: ReadyNation, Maine Skills Gap Report

- From a nationwide perspective, in a survey of 150 Fortune 1000 company talent recruiters, only half said they can find enough qualified candidates with either two-year or four-year STEM degrees in a timely manner.
- Three out of four executives believe that soft skills are becoming increasingly important because of global competition and the pace of change in the business environment.
- In a 2010 survey of 2,000 executives conducted by the American Management Association, nine out of ten executives said that soft skills like communication, collaboration and critical thinking are important to support business expansion, but less than half of those executives rated their employees as above average in those skills.
- In a 2013 survey of more than 200 corporate executives, the availability of skilled labor was identified as the top concern (95% of respondents) when deciding where to locate their facilities.

ECONOMY – MAINE

SOURCE:

ReadyNation, Maine Skills Gap Report

- Maine runs the risk of falling behind when it comes to preparing its future workforce to compete successfully in a global economy.
- To meet the future demands of a more skilled and educated workforce, policymakers should make sure we invest in what really works and include promising and evidence-based approaches that will ensure young people enter the workforce with the skills Maine businesses need.

ECONOMY – COLLEGE

SOURCE:

Gallup Business Journal, October 9, 2014

“Make a Difference. Show Students You Care”

It's about getting a job, not a degree

- Among college graduates, those who had an “internship or job where they applied what they were learning in the classroom,” “worked on projects that took a semester or more to complete,” and were “actively involved in extracurricular activities or organizations” during college double their odds of being engaged at work later in life.
- Yet, only 6% of all college graduates strongly agreed to all three of these statements.
- The number one reason to go to college is “to get a good job.” It’s not a degree. It’s a good job.

“It’s the educonomy, stupid”

- Since in the 1970s, the U.S. is now running a deficit between the number of new businesses being “born” and the number “dying” each year. (Previous surplus of about 100,000 and now a deficit of about 70,000.)
- Right now, we’re more likely to see kids with entrepreneurial talent diagnosed as underperforming troublemakers than we are to recognize them as the next Mark Zuckerberg.

Google

- Google--the world’s most admired brand--announced that it found almost no correlation between the grades and test scores of its employees and their success on the job, so the company no longer asks all its applicants to provide these things.

SOURCE:

Bangor Daily News Editorial, July 29, 2014 “College

Cost Isn’t a Big Problem for Poor Students”

- There are plenty of ideas for mitigating those kinds of barriers from requiring that high school students complete an application for both federal student aid and at least one college as a condition of their graduation, say — to the less modest, such as tying federal funding for colleges to the share of low-income students they admit and graduate.

EMPLOYMENT - TEENS

SOURCE:

Challenge, 2014, vol. 57, issue 3, pages 60-83

Dr. Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Walter McHugh with Will Kent

“Deteriorating Labor Market Fortunes for Young Adults”

- Teens were the only age group in the U.S. to have failed to experience any net new increase in their employment levels through the first three and one-half years of job recovery.
- ...steep declines in cumulative work experience during the teen years will have adverse effects on their (teen's) employment and earnings, most severe for those youth who were both out of school and out of work in their late teens and early twenties.
- The costs of low employment in the teen years are not simply confined to the lost earning as a teen but also include lower employability, wages and annual earnings in the young adult years, especially from lost full-time employment and training from employers.
- These lost opportunities in work experience also contribute to a reduction in the soft skills of attendance, coworker relationships, ability to work under supervision, and good customer relations.

SOURCE:

LifeSiteNews.com, Pope Francis, October 1, 2013

- The most serious of the evils that afflict the world today are youth unemployment and the loneliness of the old. The young need work and hope but get neither one nor the other. –

SOURCE:

Harper's, Jeff Madrick, December 2013

“The Real Lost Generation”

- The disconnection of youth from jobs and school has led to declines in the marriage rate, household formation, and homeownership.

COLLEGE RETENTION

SOURCE:

Bangor Daily News, Nell Gluckman, September 26, 2014

“A whole different universe compared to high school: Deer Isle-Stonington program aims to boost college retention”

- Project Launch was started at Deer Isle-Stonington High School in 2012 to help students feel supported as they transition from high school to college.
- College-bound high school seniors are matched with graduates who've made the transition.
- Four students joined the program in 2012; two are still enrolled in college. During the second year, 17 students joined; 16 are still enrolled. Last year, 22 students joined; 18 enrolled in college this fall, three deferred or are coming up with another plan and one has dropped out of UMaine.



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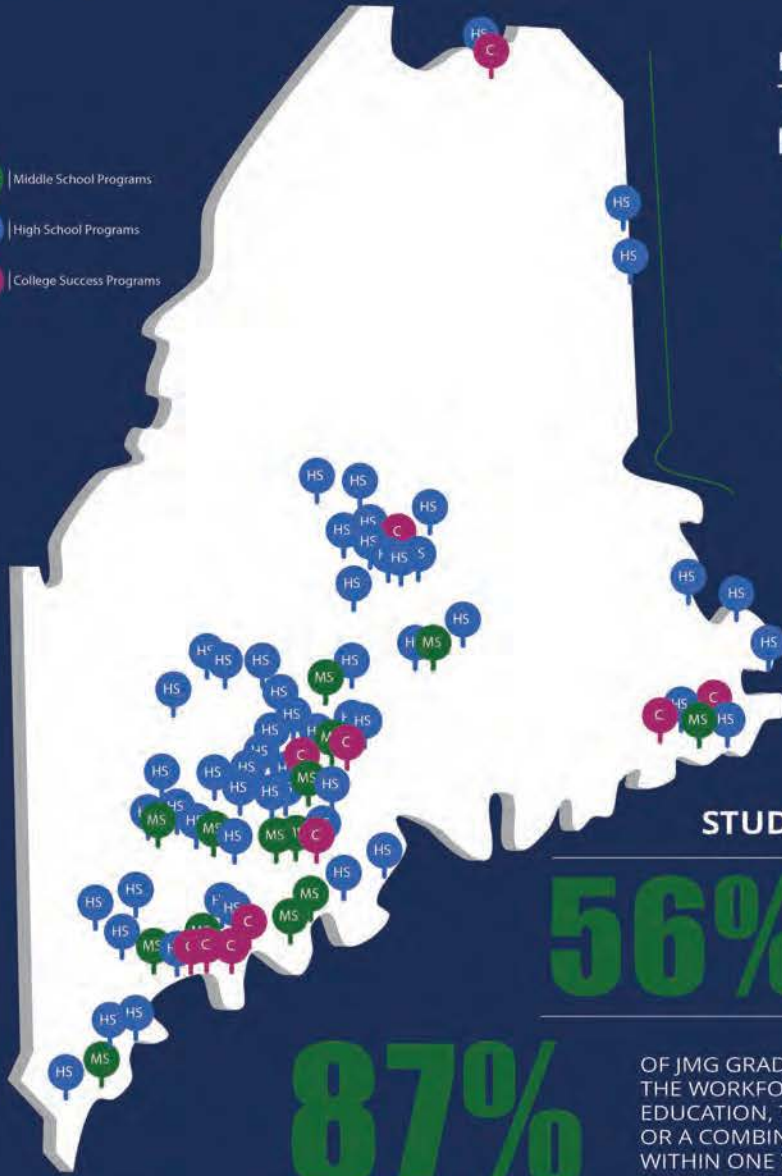
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JMG partners with public education and private businesses to offer results-driven solutions to ensure all Maine students graduate, attain post-secondary credentials and pursue meaningful careers.

Recognized by Jobs for America's Graduates as **THE BEST PROGRAM OF ITS KIND IN THE NATION FOR 23 YEARS.**

- MS Middle School Programs
- HS High School Programs
- C College Success Programs



SERVES MORE THAN

7,000
STUDENTS ANNUALLY

43,000

STUDENTS HAVE BEEN SERVED SINCE 1993

56%

OF JMG GRADS ENROLL IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING HIGH SCHOOL

87%

OF JMG GRADS ARE ENGAGED IN THE WORKFORCE, CONTINUED EDUCATION, THE MILITARY, OR A COMBINATION THEREOF, WITHIN ONE YEAR AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL



6 YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, JMG STUDENTS ARE EARNING **14% MORE** THAN ALL OTHER STUDENTS OF THE SAME AGE

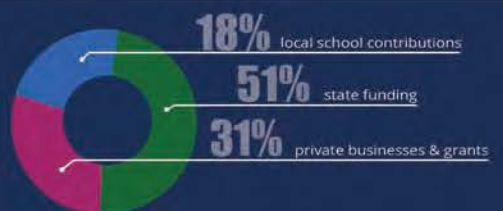
*According to the Maine Department of Labor

4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE



JMG's programmatic funding support is based on a public-private partnership of shared investments from school partners, the state of Maine, and private businesses and foundations.

JMG's annual operating budget is just over 9 million dollars, and its diversity of funding sources break down into these average percentages on a year-to-year basis.



Follow-up Status Report (Senior Only)

- Created on 6/2/2017
- Jobs for Maine's Graduates
- Senior
- 2015-2016
- 05/01/2017
- 05/31/2017

Total Participants	589	Graduates				Non-Graduates	
		Totals	Percentages	Standards	Deviations	Totals	Percentages
Deceased		569	96.60%	90%	6.60%	20	3.40%
POSITIVE OUTCOMES							
Full-Time Job with no School/Training		169	29.70%			4	20.00%
Full-Time Job with School/Training		136	23.90%			0	0.00%
Part-Time Job with no School/Training		65	11.42%			2	10.00%
Part-Time Job with School/Training		7	1.23%			0	0.00%
Total Civilian Job Placements		377	66.26%			6	30.00%
Military Service		15	2.64%			0	0.00%
Total Civilian Job Placements and Military Service		392	68.89%	60%	8.89%	6	30.00%
4 Year College Enrollments (High School for NG)		42	7.38%			HS 3	15.00%
2 Year College Enrollments (GED for NG)		52	9.14%			GED 0	0.00%
Other Education or Training Program Enrollments (Includes C4/C2 for NG)		8	1.41%			2	10.00%
In School		0	0.00%			0	0.00%
In School Connected		0	0.00%			0	0.00%
Total Positive Outcomes		494	86.82%	80%	6.82%	11	55.00%
NON-POSITIVE OUTCOMES							
Unavailable for Employment (As Per JAG Standard)		4	0.70%			0	0.00%
Unable to Contact During the Reporting Period		17	2.99%			1	5.00%
Available/Unemployed		54	9.49%			8	40.00%
Total Non-Positive Outcomes		75	13.18%			9	45.00%
PLACEMENT ANALYSIS							
Total in Full-Time Jobs (FTN + FTW + MS)		320	81.63%	60%	21.63%	4	66.67%
Total in Full-Time Outcomes (FTN + FTW + MS + PTW + C4 + C2 + OE / Graduates)		429	75.40%			6	30.00%
Total in Full-Time Placement (FTN + FTW + MS + PTW / Employed Graduates)		327	83.42%	80%	3.42%	4	66.67%
Further Education Rate (C4 + C2 + OE + HS + GED + PTW + FTW + IS + IC)		245	43.06%			5	25.00%



THE STATUTE STATE OF MAINE

AN ACT TO IMPROVE STUDENT RETENTION IN MAINE'S POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6902-A is enacted to read:

§6902-A. Postsecondary services

The corporation shall provide services, in accordance with this section and for the purpose of significantly increasing the percentage of eligible students who obtain a postsecondary degree, to postsecondary institutions in the State to assist students in completing a postsecondary course of study.

-
1. **“Eligible student” defined.** As used in this section, “eligible student” means a student who:
 - A. Has previously been enrolled in a high school program administered by the corporation;
 - B. Has been in or currently is in foster care; or
 - C. Has earned a high school equivalency diploma through an alternative program within the previous 5 years.

 2. **Student services.** The corporation shall:
 - A. Provide academic and social mentoring and counseling to eligible students, including monitoring of academic performance and connection to campus life;
 - B. Assist each eligible student in developing an individualized academic plan for completing a course of study and consider each eligible student’s individual academic needs and provide connections to sources of academic support, if necessary;
 - C. Develop a system of peer mentoring between eligible students and other college students and between eligible students and college graduates; and
 - D. Provide eligible students with financial guidance relating to postsecondary expenses, including assisting eligible students in obtaining all available sources of financial aid.
-

Sec. 2. Report. Jobs for Maine’s Graduates shall determine methods for implementing the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 6902-A and report its findings to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 31, 2016. The committee may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

APPROVED APRIL 14, 2016 BY GOVERNOR PAUL R. LEPAGE | CHAPTER 466 PUBLIC LAW



COLLEGE SUCCESS



Summary of outcomes for first two cohorts of students

The combined Fall 15 and Fall 16 total students = 311

Comparative data benchmark against National Clearinghouse Education Services:

College Success program First to Second Year Overall Retention Rate = 79%

Campus-Based NCES First to Second Year Retention Rate = 61%

College Success Retention Rate Both Cohorts (311) at end of two years = 61%

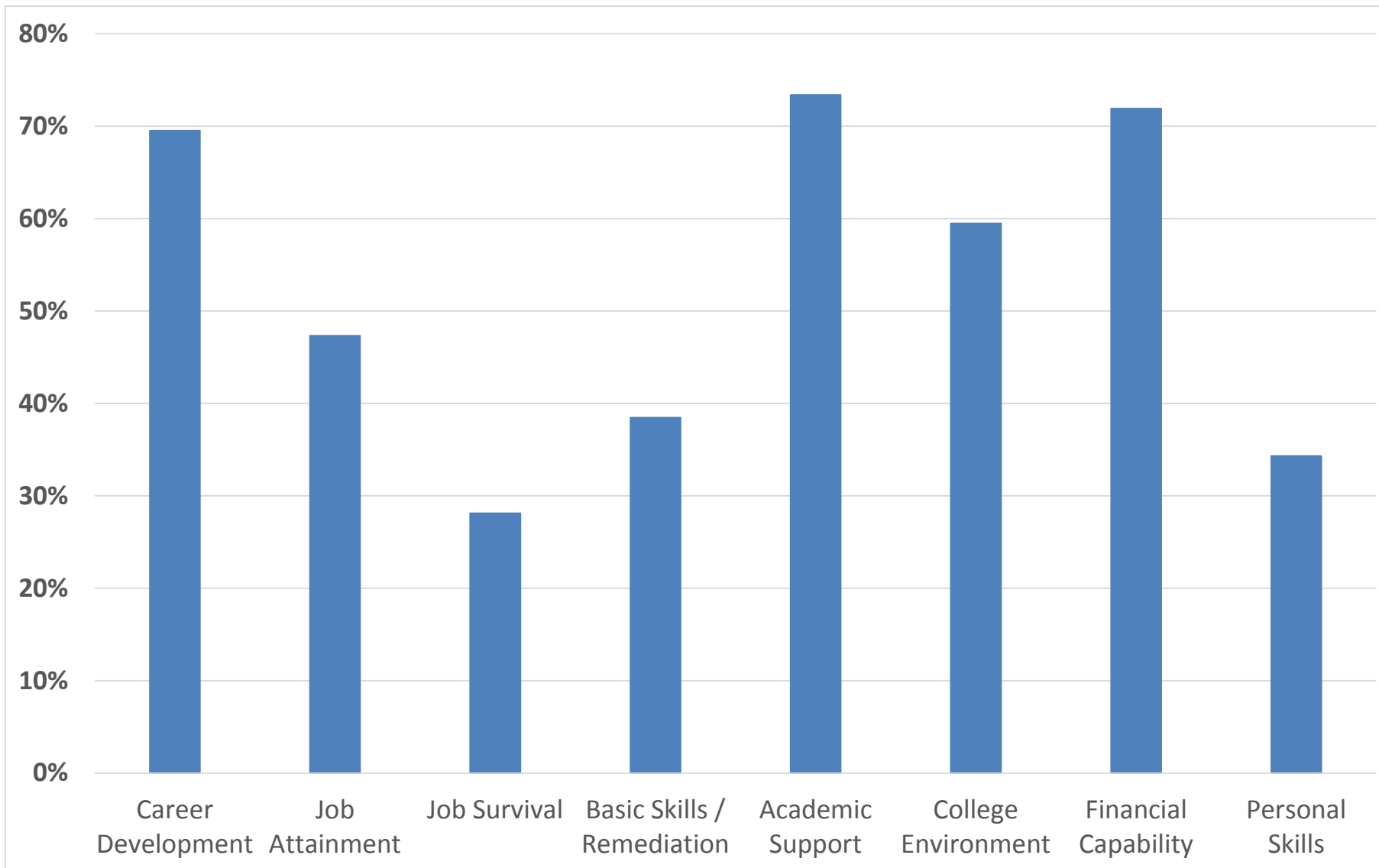
College Success Persistence Rate Both Cohorts (311) at end of two years = 68%

College Success Positive Outcome Rate Both Cohorts (311) at end of two years = 87%

**Includes enrolled in college, working full-time, or degree attainment*



How did college success specialists support their students?



- Specialists coached 70% of students on career development.
- Specialists coached 72% of students on financial capability.
- 73% of students needed academic support.



Retention Rates by Campus

College	NCES Benchmark Campus 1st Year Retention	Cohort	1st Year Retention	2nd Year Retention	Total Retention
KVCC	67%	Fall '15	81%	77%	63%
		Fall '16	56%		56%
SMCC	55%	Fall '15	84%	50%	42%
		Fall '16	71%		71%
UMA	56%	Fall '15	75%	100%	75%
		Fall '16	61%		61%
UMM	63%	Fall '15	80%	56%	45%
		Fall '16	78%		78%
USM	64%	Fall '15	55%	100%	59%
		Fall '16	75%		75%
WCC	61%	Fall '15	100%	71%	71%
		Fall '16	50%		50%
Average = 61%	61%	Fall '15	79%	61%	54%
		Fall '16	67%		67%
		TOTAL			61%

- The first-to-second year retention rate for the Fall 2015 cohort - that is, from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 - is 79%. The average first-to-second year retention rate across the public campuses is 61%.
- The second-to-third year retention rate for the Fall 2015 cohort (that is, from Fall 2016 to today) is 61%. There is not comparative data from campuses.
- The first-to-second year retention rate for the Fall 2016 cohort is 67%.



Persistence Rate for PostSecondary Education

College	Cohort	1st Year Persistence	2nd Year Persistence	Total Persistence / Graduation To-Date
KVCC	Fall '15	81%	77%	63%
	Fall '16	56%		56%
SMCC	Fall '15	89%	57%	51%
	Fall '16	75%		75%
UMA	Fall '15	94%	80%	75%
	Fall '16	67%		67%
UMM	Fall '15	90%	61%	55%
	Fall '16	93%		93%
USM	Fall '15	75%	100%	73%
	Fall '16	88%		88%
WCC	Fall '15	100%	79%	79%
	Fall '16	50%		50%
TOTAL	Fall '15	87%	71%	61%
	Fall '16	73%		73%
TOTAL	TOTAL			68%

- Student-centered approach to support students in persistence of post-secondary goals.
- Campuses do not track persistence — there is no comparative data.
- The combined Fall 15 and Fall 16 total students = 311.
- Of those students, 87% of students have experienced positive outcomes, including remaining enrolled in college, graduating, or working full-time.



The Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstration Grant Building Collaboration to Improve Outcomes

Presented by:
Libby Stone-Sterling - DVR
Kim Lipp – JMG
YIT
March 10, 2017



Introduction

- The importance of paid work experience
- VR's Experience
 - What we know about youth
 - What the data tells us
- Why this grant?

The Grant

- What: **Disability Innovation Fund: Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstration Grant (CFDA Number: 84.421B)**
- Length of Grant: **5 years** (began October 1, 2016)
- Amount of Funding: **\$2.27M** over 5 years
- Funder: **Rehabilitation Services Administration** (part of the US Department of Education – Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services)
- Purpose: Provide **effective work-based learning experiences** (at least 2 per student) in coordination with other transition services, including pre-employment transition services and customized employment, to students with disabilities to ensure that those **students are prepared for postsecondary education and competitive integrated employment.**

Partners

- Jobs for Maine's Graduates
- Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)
- American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Center for Workforce Research and Information

Partners Cont.

But we'll also be working with ...

- Youth and their families
- Schools
- Employers
- Youth in Transition Committee
- Community Rehabilitation Providers

Grant Purpose/Goals

- Serve at least 200 students who are within two years of high school graduation or exit
 - Bangor and Augusta catchment areas
- Evaluate the effectiveness of two interventions
 - “Enhanced” Jobs for Maine’s Graduates programming
 - Progressive Employment
- Develop replicable, sustainable and collaborative ways to provide pre-employment transition services to youth with disabilities
- Within 1 year after graduation at least 90 percent of study participants will enter postsecondary education or competitive integrated employment.

Strategies

- Expand JMG programs to five new high schools in the Bangor area
- Cross-train all JMG Specialists as ACRE-certified Employment Specialists
- Launch “Progressive Employment” in the Augusta and Bangor catchment areas
 - Build new relationships with local employers
- Provide additional transition resources (Rehabilitation Counselor I’s) to provide direct services to students and coordinate with VR Counselors as well as provide support to JMG Specialists on disability and inclusion

Timeline

- Year 1 – Planning Year
 - VR & JMG hire grant staff
 - Work with partners to finalize model and evaluation plan
 - Begin cross-training of JMG Specialists
- Years 2-5
 - Implementation and Evaluation



Serving Maine's most vulnerable youth to keep them in school, teach life and career skills, provide job-related experiences, and connect students to pathways for post-secondary education and careers



FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR YOUTH IN CARE

JMG provides financial literacy training, coaching and access to matched savings to youth ages 14 to 26 who are currently or have been supported by the Maine foster care system for at least one day since the age of 14. JMG delivers the Opportunity Passport™ (OP™) curriculum. Each youth participates in a minimum of eight hours of training provided by JMG. Youth who demonstrate a readiness - evidenced by a desire and commitment to set savings goals and an ongoing source of income - are then enrolled in the matched savings program. This program has proven when education is applied in conjunction with guided practice – giving youth the opportunity to actually save money and spend it wisely – the impact is profound and long lasting. Through the matched savings program, youth can receive up to \$1000 in matched funds toward specific key expenses supporting continued education, credit repair, workforce development, housing and transportation. JMG staff assist youth in establishing a bank account and provide ongoing, consistent support and coaching as youth develop savings goals and plan for asset purchases. Referrals come through Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT) activities (JMG participates in quarterly Advisory Team meetings with YLAT members, the YLAT Teen Conference, and MYTC/YLAT Celebration dinner), DHHS caseworkers, DHHS transition workers, foster parents, adoptive parents, educators and support staff.

RESULTS

ANNUAL GOALS:

- Maintain and support a minimum of 125 youth in the matched savings program.
- Provide financial literacy training to a minimum of 75 youth per year

CUMULATIVE RESULTS FROM JULY 1, 2004:

- 566 Maine youth enrolled in the matched savings program
- More than \$1.3 million youth dollars + matching dollars supporting continued education, credit repair, workforce development, housing and transportation.
- More than 420 additional youth were provided the financial literacy training, but did not enroll in the matched savings program
- Outcomes of Note:
 - 188 youth have accessed the full \$1,000 for a single, large purchase; 77 have done so for amounts from \$800-\$999
 - 31 youth utilized matching funds 10 times or more; of the 31, 14 matched 15 times or more; one completed 29 matches and another completed 32 matches (over eight years).
 - Four (4) youth have used matching funds for the down payment on a home
- Years of enrollment:
 - 52 youth were or are enrolled for five years or more and have actively used matching funds
 - 5 years: 9
 - 6 years: 20
 - 7 years: 7
 - 8 years: 7
 - 9 years: 5
 - 10 years: 4 (one of these became a home owner)
 - Youth 1 (total match dollars) \$9,096
 - Youth 2: \$6,694
 - Youth 3: \$9,941
 - Youth 4: \$7,166





Opportunity Passport™

Since 2004 the Opportunity Passport™ program has served over 560 Maine youth currently or formerly in foster care. This financial capability and matched savings program is designed to help support youth in successful transition to adulthood. Dollars saved by participants plus matching dollars supported:

- 308 **'Other'** purchases (utilities, ongoing living expenses, etc.);
- 301 **vehicle** purchases, or **insurance** coverage;
- 249 payments for **education expenses** like college classes and laptops;
- 157 payments for **apartment** security deposits, first month's rent, or down payment on a home;
- 102 **investments** (such as Certificate of Deposit accounts or retirement accounts);
- 46 payments for **credit repair/credit building**;
- 41 payments for **medical/dental** expenses, and
- 7 purchases related to **microenterprise**

**TOTAL youth dollars + matching dollars =
\$1,292,874 !!**

Participation in a Financial Education training is the first step in preparing for enrollment in the Opportunity Passport™ program.

INTERESTED in learning more??? Contact JMG

Debbie Bechard, Tel: (207) 620-7180 x212; dbechard@jmg.org
www.jmg.org



RECRUITING, ENROLLING AND SERVING 80 YOUTH IN CARE IN JMG MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAMS IN ALIGNMENT WITH LEAP COLLABORATIVE

In support of JMG's mission to identify students who face barriers to education, and to guide each one on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career, and productive adulthood, we are deepening our strategies to serve three critical audiences with intent including foster care youth, economically disadvantaged youth, and students with disabilities. JMG is supporting this work in alignment and collaboration with the LEAP initiative. JMG offers more than 104 programs throughout the state of Maine, reaching students in all sixteen counties. JMG is the only nonprofit offering a continuum of support to students from middle school, through high school, and into post-secondary education and careers. JMG's approach is built on a strong collaboration with public education and private employers; our programs focus on keeping at-risk students in school while empowering them with the personal and career skills needed to become productive adults.



RESULTS

ANNUAL GOALS:

- At least 90% of students enrolled in JMG programs will graduate from high school.
- Youth participating in JMG's College Success program will be supported as they navigate post-secondary education with a focus on persistence and attainment of credentials, including licensing and certification programs.
- Through JMG's student-centered approach to teaching, each student will be treated as an individual, with different barriers and learning styles.
- Programs are supported by full-time JMG Specialists, working within schools and on college campuses.
- The role of JMG Specialists is to advocate for the students, and to determine what the individual student's needs are, including coordination and communication with DHHS Caseworkers and Transition workers and school guidance counselors.
- The Specialist acts as mentor and educator providing students with a curriculum that teaches important 21st century skills including job skills, communication and team-building skills, leadership and time management, and financial literacy.

CUMULATIVE RESULTS FROM JULY 1, 2017:

- Total youth enrolled in JMG high school programs 2017-2018: 50
- Total youth enrolled in JMG College Success programs 2017-2018: 30
- Total youth currently enrolled 2017-2018: 80
- Additional youth expected to be enrolled in second semester: 10 high school students
- Total average contact hours for first quarter: 30 hours per youth
- 100% graduation for 2016-2017 seniors - 6 of 6 seniors graduated from Year 1 of LEAP partnership in June 2017
- 29 Youth were served via JMG/LEAP in 2016-2017 academic year, all 29 have persisted with education, advancing from grade level to grade level for 2017-2018 academic year.
- Of the 29, six students were seniors; all six graduated - 100% graduation rate.
- Outcomes for those six graduates:
 - 2 enrolled at University of Maine, and supported via JMG Post Secondary Navigation
 - 1 enrolled at University of Farmington, and supported via JMG Post Secondary Navigation
- Note: All three students attending college have been enrolled in Opportunity Passport™; and additional support includes participation in study groups, drop-in meetings, and "intrusive advising" from JMG Specialists, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, texts, and emails.
- 1 employed fulltime.
- 2 employed part time/1 of those is in process of moving out of state.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THREE NEW DROP-OUT RECOVERY PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH PORTLAND, WATERVILLE, AND AUBURN/LEWISTON

The JMG Drop Out Recovery program is a student-centered approach to supporting and empowering students who have not been successful in the traditional classroom environment. It is designed to serve youth (ages 16-24) who are in the process of disengaging – are close to or have dropped out - from the traditional school system and are interested in completing requirements for a high school diploma or attaining a high school diploma equivalent, and in pursuing employment and/or postsecondary education. The primary mission of this program is to re-engaged students and to provide an array of counseling, employability and technical skills development, professional association, job development, and job placement services that will result in either a quality job leading to a career after graduation and/or enrollment in a postsecondary education and training program.



RESULTS

ANNUAL GOALS:

- The JMG Drop Out Recovery program targets 20 to 25 students who are economically disadvantaged to reengage them and connect them to a pathway for a high school diploma or equivalent and then to transition to a positive destination in the form of a job, postsecondary education or the military.
- The vast majority of students served via this model find themselves in a difficult situation because of their demographic characteristics and perceived barriers to staying in and completing high school or transitioning to a quality job and/or postsecondary education.
- Students are recruited, often in partnership with a school districts other alternative offerings, or community based programs, to attend JMG instructional classes and they receive follow-up support services for a year following completion of the program.
- A trained career specialist provides counseling and classroom instruction. Participants are also equipped with employability skills in 20 employability competencies that will prepare them for the workplace. •
- These competencies are organized in the following six competency categories: career development, job attainment, job survival, basic skills, leadership and self-development, and personal skills competencies.
- JMG Specialists also assist graduates in the exploration of postsecondary educational opportunities and show them how to navigate the financial aid process to pursue these opportunities.
- Participants receive assistance in graduating from high school or completing requirements for a diploma equivalent certificate.
- One of the key components of the model is the provision of follow-up services for up to a year following completion of the program. The follow-up activities of specialists are critical to documenting the labor market and schooling/training experiences of completers. Information on the post-completion labor market, schooling, and training outcomes of participants is to be collected regularly by the specialist.
- The expectation is that 50% of these high-barrier youth will graduate or receive the equivalent of a high school diploma, and 80% will have a positive outcome, including employment, alternative education, or military.

CUMULATIVE RESULTS JULY 1, 2017 THRU SEPTEMBER 30, 2017:

- Total number of disconnected youth actively meeting with JMG Drop Out Recovery Specialists: 14
- Total number of contact hours with these 14 youth: 105
- Total number of youth recruited with the expectation that they will become active participants in the next reporting quarter: 25
- Referral process is ongoing; this number represents youth who have been referred but with whom contact has not yet been made: 12

JOY Program Report

2016-2017



Nine Years of JOY!

JMG students and Specialists from Maine middle schools, high schools and colleges launched the ninth year of Jumpstart Our Youth (JOY) in the fall of 2016. A variety of curricula and research typically begins with the question, “What is philanthropy?” and evolves into a student lead understanding of giving, the work of community organizations, and the difficult decision-making process of being a grant maker. Through the JOY program, many students experience growth of their own personal commitment to community service.

YOUTH PHILANTHROPY BY THE NUMBERS

The numbers below provide a quick snapshot of JOY in 2016/17 school year:

- Grant awards totaled \$73,000
- 76 JMG programs across Maine participated
- 2,621 JMG students had an active role in the JOY project
- Those students dedicated a total of 19,186 hours to JOY in the form of classroom and community service time;

Of this total 3,197 hours were direct community service to youth-serving nonprofits.

- 116 grants were awarded to 75 distinct organizations across the state
- Student-led fundraising efforts yielded over \$4,300 in additional funds for distribution.

Jumpstart Our Youth, or JOY, is all about Philanthropy which is donating time and or money to a cause that makes your heart happy. Philanthropy can make a big impact in rural counties such as Washington County in which volunteerism is heavily depended upon. We take pride in what we do with JOY and look forward to learning about new non-profit organizations each year.

~ Rebecca Lenfestey, JMG Specialist at Washington Academy

A SAMPLING OF FUNDED PROGRAMS

This year, four JMG college sites (Southern Maine Community College, University of Southern Maine, University of Maine at Augusta, and Thomas College) participated in JOY for the first time. At Southern Maine Community College, the student Career Association - also in its inaugural year - selected the



JMG students at Narraguagus High School proudly display items they collected for a JOY grant recipient.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) as the \$1,000 grant recipient. The students involved in making this decision felt strongly about giving to this agency. First-year student Emily Albert stated, "Mental health issues are impacting students all over campus, and this is an area that often goes unfunded, and unrecognized." Emily and several other students will be participating in NAMI's 15th annual Maine Walk on the SMCC campus on Sunday, September 24, where a ceremonial mock check presentation will take place. The

Career Association also hopes to facilitate more NAMI-sponsored events and workshops on and around campus in coordination with SMCC Student Life and Residence coordinators.

JMG students at Belfast Area High School awarded JOY funds to the Belfast Parks and Recreation program to support the *Beehive* summer program for children ages 6-13. The *Beehive* operates three days each week from mid-June to early August and provides opportunities for gardening, recreation, art projects and special events. The program targets children who would not have the means to attend more traditional summer camp.

The Community Bicycle Center in Biddeford was the grant recipient selected by Biddeford High School JMG students. First established as the Earn-a-Bike program in 2001, it provides enrichment opportunities for youth through bicycling-related activities. JOY funds will support activities like bike repair and maintenance, community outreach, cycling adventures, the "STEM Bike Repair" program, the "Bike Doctor" mobile bike repair outreach, and the "Kids Bike Factory" job-readiness program.

It was a great honor to help present these checks to the non-profits. We partnered with the JMG program at Thomas College so we were able to give away \$2,000 in total. We gave \$1,000 each to the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Autism Society of Maine. I was thrilled to see how much this donation means to them. I know that these donations will be put into good use and it will help them with their programs!

—*Keristin Grant, Senior at Lawrence High School*

Long distances traveled by patients to the Lafayette Cancer Center in Brewer spawned the development of *Sarah's House of Maine*, in honor of Sarah Lunette Robinson, who received treatment at the center before succumbing to the disease. JOY funds will support the creation of flower beds in front of the

house, which provides comfortable hospitality shelter for cancer patients who travel great distances from the more rural parts of our state.

Hall-Dale High School JMG students selected *The Summer Camp* to receive JOY funding. The Summer Camp will provide a 10-day residential summer camp adventure for 120 low-income and foster girls (age 6-16) during the summer of 2017. The goal of the camp is to nurture each child's physical, social and emotional development, encourage racial acceptance, and promote a lifelong appreciation of Maine's natural treasures. Activities include boating, swimming, dance, photography, hiking, archery, arts and crafts and the opportunity to build lasting friendships.

Tree Street Youth, a program that serves at-risk Lewiston/Auburn youth is now in its fifth year. The summer program will serve 80 elementary and 60-80 middle and high school youth at no cost to their families. A drop-in center and leadership opportunities are offered to older youth along with a wide range of academic activities, arts and athletics for all ages.

In JOY I learned a lot about our community such as the fact that though it may not look like it, there are a lot of young children and teens that are less fortunate. Kids that don't know where they will be staying the night or getting [their] next meal. I learned what a non-profit organization was, before JOY I had no clue what that meant. There are so many businesses in our community that I didn't know about before and one that I knew of but didn't know that they were a non-profit... I would like to thank the JOY program for teaching me about all of these non-profits and issues in our community.

-Liam Griffin, Mahoney Middle School

TIMELINE

The 2016-17 academic year was the ninth of the JOY program. For both new and returning JMG Specialists and students, November is the start of an exciting youth philanthropy project that stretches over most of the school year. The program establishes benchmarks for core components of the project while allowing flexibility for schools following either a semester or trimester schedule.

Beginning in November, high school and middle school students received instruction on philanthropy including definitions, history, and examples of philanthropy within their communities, across Maine, and around the world. The JMG internal web drive offers a wealth of resources for students as well as new and experienced JMG Specialists. It is impressive to see just how informed JMG students are about their community needs and the nonprofit organizations that work

to meet those needs. Older students who participate in JOY for more than one year are enlisted as leaders for research and discussion.

Through the end of January students researched potential grant recipients, learned about and distributed a request for proposal (RFP), and in many cases invited those potential grantees to the classroom for informational presentations or connected via the internet. The final grant selection process was determined and community service plans were underway.

The timeline has developed differently for JMG college sites. Because final exams are taken in early December, and winter break extends to mid-January, the newly-formed Career Association at Southern Maine Community College did not start discussing the JOY Project until mid-February. Additionally, with no dedicated JMG college class on campus in the spring, arranging a common weekly meeting time with this student group presented a scheduling challenge. Since all participating students were familiar with JOY from their previous high school programs, there was less time spent on introductory JOY components and more time focused on research and review of past grant recipients, and the decision making process.

JOY provides students with an opportunity to learn the decision making process in an authentic way. They understand the importance of their decision and carefully consider each of the applications. They truly see it through a personal lens and do not make the decision lightly. Students become passionate about their positions and will often share personal stories when they believe strongly in an organization or a proposal.

-Maria Morris, JMG Specialist Morse High School

The months of February and March was the decision making period for high school and middle school students as well, as they reviewed all applications for funding and began narrowing the selection to those that would receive funding. As youth philanthropists, they developed an understanding of how great the need is in each of their communities and how impactful their decisions will be.

The months of April and May are a time of celebration for JOY and other student achievements. Many students and their Specialists combine the presentation of the large symbolic JOY checks with end-of-year celebrations, awards ceremonies and senior pre-graduation recognition. In addition to parents of JMG students, invitations are extended to JMG board members, legislators, and community members.

SELECTION PROCESS

With guidance from Specialists, JMG students implement a variety of strategies to select final grant recipients. These include blind balloting, a debate format, a scoring rubric or some combination of these.

The decision-making process, as with other aspects of the JOY project, is truly student driven. Students are encouraged to continue researching and debating as the applications are reviewed. Using JOY website resources students can review lists of past awards, learn whether a past grantee submitted an evaluation report, and which other programs in the area have been funded. Some JMG students and their families have been the beneficiaries of the good work done by grant applicants – the JOY program gives them a whole new perspective into the world of nonprofit organizations in and around their communities.

CHALLENGES

JMG Specialists are credited with streamlining the logistics of the JOY program to make it an engaging and meaningful experience for their students. Challenges are typically related to technology or

I liked Stuff a Bus because we brought in cans and non-perishable food for people who don't have enough money for food. It makes me happy knowing that our school helped people in need because it's good for our community and the people in it. If I were on the streets with no money and nowhere to live I'd be thankful for the stuff a bus project because it would help me get a meal if I needed one.

-Avery Hamor, Mahoney Middle School

sometimes the seeming lack of non-profits in a school's immediate vicinity. These are simply bumps in the road, and the Specialists incorporate the process of resolution into lessons for their students. Through peer mentoring, regional meetings and frequent communication with program management, the Specialists worked through these minor challenges and allowed their nine years of JOY experience to simply shine through.

NEW STAFF TRAINING

As in years before, JOY training for new JMG classroom Specialists is done in coordination with regional managers as part of training sessions scheduled throughout the year. The majority of new hires receive training in the fall, before the

official November launch of the program. Training covers the history, goals and objectives of JOY, exploration of the website and resources, and sharing of past JOY successes. Individualized JOY database (Collaborative Studios) training takes place via conference call with the program manager. Every new Specialist at JMG is paired with a seasoned Specialist who serves as a mentor through the first year and beyond – this mentoring relationship has become an important source of support and guidance for the JOY project.

PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION

Awarding JOY funds is often paired with community service. During the 2016/17 academic year, over 2600 JMG students were actively involved in 3,197 hours of community service. Without a doubt, youth philanthropy in Maine is making a difference to many children and families served by non-profits across the state. The examples below highlight the results of these coordinated community efforts:

The Lewiston YWCA and the Lewiston JMG program have had an excellent partnership for years and the students were excited to have the



Mahoney Middle School JMG students prepare items for donation.

opportunity to give back by spending over 100 hours working on riddles, locks, and scenery for a Haunted Walk and an Escape Room. When Halloween season finally arrived, students showed up over the weekend to host the walk, the room, and helped during the Halloween luncheon as the public joined

The act of giving is much better in the long run than the act of receiving.

-Kyle Ricker, Wiscasset Middle and High School

them for the final piece of their spooky fundraiser.

At Southern Maine Community College, JMG students are planning is to focus on campus-wide awareness of mental illness by participating in the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk in September.

JMG students at Dexter Regional High School raised an additional \$208 for the SAD 46 Backpack Program by selling bags of kettle corn as part of a community service project; Mahoney Middle School JMG students raised additional funds for Dream Factory of Maine by organizing a Spring Charity Walk (\$1100)and hosting a talent show (\$400).

IN CLOSING

It is clear that the impact of JOY is tangible beyond the classroom and beyond the direct impact of funding dollars. It is the hope that past and current JMG students are engaged, productive community members and that some will even become Maine's future philanthropists! Teresa (Teri) Blaschke, Grant Writer/Development Associate at Camp Sunshine in Casco had this to say:

This is my first year working with the JMG program. I know I only see a sliver of what the course/program helps students accomplish. However, the more I learn about the program through speaking with students and JMG specialists, the more impressed I am.

At all the schools I visited this year to present for the JOY grant, I was greeted warmly, students introduced themselves, and looked you in the eye when speaking – a skill that many teens do not have. While these are small things, they are building blocks for future success.



JMG students at the Rose Gaffney School prepare signage for a JOY fundraiser

At Oak Hill, I was particularly impressed with the leadership the students displayed. The students took the lead in making the first connection with nonprofit organizations, and coordinating follow up, which included rescheduling presentations due to weather. At every turn, the communication was clear. During the presentations students were engaged, asking thoughtful questions of the presenters. In addition, the Oak Hill JMG students took charge of organizing their community service project at Camp Sunshine with our facilities manager.

“Philanthropy is not about money it’s about feeling the pain of others and caring enough about their needs to help.”

-Camden Harmon, Grade 9,
Greenville Consolidated High School

For the presentation of JOY grant funds, I had the privilege to attend large school assemblies and smaller closing ceremonies with just JMG students, their friends and parents. At both, I saw students take chances and demonstrate confidence whether it was speaking in front of a couple hundred people or reading a poem they wrote themselves, it was evident the JMG students took pride –as they should- in their accomplishments.

JMG Specialists are looking ahead with anticipation to launching an astounding 10th year of JOY in the next (2017-18) school year! Tyler King, JMG Specialist at Mt. Ararat High School (Topsham) expressed the sentiment this way:

As we get close to almost a decade of being privileged with the Jumpstart Our Youth opportunity in our community and school, it still amazes me how eye opening the experience can be for our students. In an age of ever changing technology and a world that is spinning around at a rapid rate, it is refreshing that we have programs like JOY that give the students a chance to make a difference at a grassroots level. The exposure that our students get to the very important work that nonprofit organizations are doing in our communities is priceless.

And, it is of utmost importance to remember that nearly a decade of thoughtful grant making and community service in the form of JOY, would not have been possible without the dedicated partnership between the Unity Foundation, the Maine Community Foundation, and Unitel, Inc. Across Maine, JMG Specialists and students are very appreciative of this amazing partnership opportunity.



Hodgdon JMG seniors gain life skills

By Joseph Cyr
 Staff Writer

HODGDON — Teaching essential life skills in a classroom setting has been the focus of the JMG program at Hodgdon Middle-High School for a number of years.

So what exactly does the JMG program do?

"JMG provides students a chance to understand and increase learning of teamwork, career building, life skills, and how to transition to be real world ready by the time they graduate," explained Jason Little, Hodgdon's JMG instructor. "We meet students where they are at and work to encourage them to step out of their comfort zones through team-building initiatives, public speaking opportunities, and community service projects."

JMG — previously known as Jobs for Maine Grads — was created in 1993 and continues as a nonprofit working with students in a public education setting. There are 91 JMG programs throughout the state, working with 6,500 students, but representation in Aroostook County is not as prevalent. Houlton, Caribou and Fort Kent are the only other school districts in Aroostook County that have JMG programs.

Little is in his first year with JMG at Hodgdon, but the school has had a long history with the program. The program began with Dave Rowe, Berny Reece and Kara Wright each taking turns with the program through the first 10 years.

"Those three set a strong program with the school administration and JMG administration," Little said. "It was so strong that one event created back in 2002 (the Veteran's Day Breakfast) continues on as a Hodgdon JMG-sponsored event."

(Please see Page 8)

JMG programs can be found across the state (middle school, high school, and college) at 91 programs, working with over 6,500 students.

"The curriculum provided by JMG to each specialist is flexible

and adaptable to allow for team building, guest speakers, tours of businesses, special event planning, and various other work/community service projects to be incorporated into the classroom time," said Little, who also was a part of the JMG program for one year in high school.

According to its website, JMG partners with Maine's public middle and high schools, community colleges, and the university system to help students reach their fullest potential. JMG is the only nonprofit in Maine offering a continuum of support to help students transition from middle school through high school graduation, onto post-secondary education through degree attainment and connections to successful career pathways.

JMG programs are hosted within Maine's public schools, and classes and year-round activities are led by JMG specialists who serve as mentors and educators. Specialists are able to develop student-centered, personalized education plans, delivered through a competency-based curriculum focusing on academic knowledge, career development skills, leadership, and teamwork.

Alex Nightingale, a senior at Hodgdon Middle-High School, serves as president for the group.

"JMG is one of the only classes in high school that really teaches you important life skills, like balancing a budget, how to write checks, and how to get involved in your community," Nightingale said.

At Hodgdon, there are 40 total students enrolled in the program, including six seniors — Noah Nash, Daden Palmer, Leigh Jurson, Taylor Desrosiers, Mercedes Brown and Nightingale.

"This program has certainly taught me some important life skills," Desrosiers said. "I had no idea how to do things like write a check or balance the checkbook."

JMG increases high school graduation rates, college retention, and degree attainment. It prepares

students for successful careers after graduation by helping them overcome academic, financial, and social barriers, according to the JMG website.

"It empowers Maine students and models Maine's next generation of young leaders, providing them with a toolbox of skills, knowledge, and best practices that they can use throughout their lives to achieve self-sufficiency, pursue their aspirations, and attain success. Each JMG student leaves the classroom with pride, direction, and a clearer sense of what they want out of life and how they are going to achieve it."

The JMG high school core program is offered in partnership with public schools, and all programs are offered as a for-credit course. The primary objective of the core program is to keep students fully engaged in high school through graduation, leading to enrollment in postsecondary education, a continued education credential or training program, or a quality job with a career pathway.

Through classroom instruction and a student-centered personalized learning approach, JMG specialists help students reach their fullest potential through academic support and building skills to ensure students are successful beyond high school. Students have the opportunity to learn critical skills in leadership, teamwork, written communications, public speaking, time management, personal finance, work habits, and career development. The JMG model also includes community service and philanthropic components, teaching students about the importance of good citizenship and giving back.

"I think this program will help me when I go off to college," Jurson said. "Especially with my learning disability, I think it has helped me a lot with moving forward and trying new things. It's been a great experience."





Pioneer Times photo/Joseph Cyr

Seniors enrolled in the Hodgdon **JMG** program include, front row from left, Leigha Jurson, Taylor Desrosiers and Mercedes Brown; and back, Daden Palmer, Noah Nash, Alex Nightingale and instructor Jason Little.



Students Learn Career Skills from Bank of America Volunteers at WCCC

Preparing to enter the workforce or to continue on in college can be a daunting stage in any person's life. Uncertainty about expectations, social skills, and a lack of experience can all reduce confidence and make the transition even more difficult to navigate. Happily, it isn't a road that we need to navigate alone, as evidenced by a recently held day-long workshop at Washington County Community College dedicated to preparing local high school students for fulfilling careers.

The workshop, which was conducted by volunteers from Bank of America in Belfast, included three separate sessions, each focused on a particular topic. Students were instructed in resume and interview tips, soft skills, and financial literacy. After the three sessions were completed, an hour-long speed networking session was held

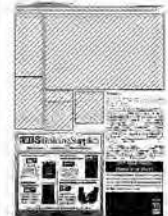
during which students met in small groups with each of the volunteers to ask questions about college, work, and future goals.

"I really felt that I was able to learn things firsthand, things that a classroom would never be able to teach me," student Camryn Michaud said. Michaud is a senior student in Toby Cole's **JMG** Career Prep class. "They taught us how to interact with people we've never met, what financial credit is and how it can affect major life decisions, and how properly writing a resume can be the difference between getting an interview and standing out among any other applicant."

"This was a classic example of how JMG works with these businesses to provide education in areas that are needed to pursue meaningful careers," Cole said of the event. "Every day, we teach our students

these lessons, but to hear them from professionals in the field who have taken different paths to get to where they are can sometimes sink in more than hearing it from us in school."

Approximately 60 students from Calais, Woodland, Shead, Washington Academy, Machias, Narraguagus, and Jonesport-Beals attended the event, which was organized through the coordinated efforts of Cole, Mary-Ann Urquhart from the College Success Program, and WCCC. This was the first time that Bank of America has traveled to Washington County to offer this kind of workshop, but Cole said he hoped to make it an annual event. "Everyone benefitted from this event and I want to make this happen for as many students as possible," Cole said.







Spruce Mountain's JMG program holds ceremony

By Pam Harnden
Livermore Falls Advertiser

JAY — Last Thursday night, Spruce Mountain High School's Jobs For Maine Graduates (JMG) Installation and Initiation Ceremony was held.

JMG Specialist Barbara Jewett welcomed everyone. She said the night's theme focuses on the quote, "If plan A doesn't work, there are 25 other letters in the alphabet."

"All the students created projects displayed this evening. This year our theme is to have multiple plans and if one doesn't work out there are other options," she said. "You should be proud of the students you see before me. They are all motivated and talented. I am blessed with each school day I get to spend with them."

Megan Mercier, JMG Vice President, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mallory Mercier, JMG Volunteer Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint that introduced the JMG program, its officers and students and the goals at the heart of JMG's Career Association.

Those goals are:

* Career Preparation: The 3rd College and Career Fair with about 50 businesses and colleges will be held Nov. 16.

* Social Awareness: JMG students made costumes from

newspaper and tape.

* Community Service: JMG students picked 1,200 pounds apples; donated them to Tri-Town Ministerial Food Bank.

* Leadership Development: The JMG Leadership Council traveled to Rome, Maine to participate in a Leadership Education Conference where they learned about innovative ideas, how to make a difference and lead in their communities.

* Civic Awareness: JMG students volunteer at French Falls and Tri-Town Ministerial Food Bank.

JMG President Skyler Lewis introduced guest speaker Alexandria Chretien. A 2016 SMHS graduate, she was JMG President her senior year. She is studying human services at Central Maine Community College. She serves as resident director overseeing 260 students in the dorms.

Chretien congratulated the JMG students for taking this step in starting their future.

"Before JMG, I was unsure about my career path. JMG helped me set goals to be the driver in my life. I am the one in control now," she said.

After the JMG officers delivered the Career Association Creed, JMG Secretary Joel Hussey introduced guest speaker Rep. Tina Riley. Riley is the parent of a senior at SMHS and active in the com-

munity.

"I am pleased to witness and participate as you take the first step along your route to success. JMG is a wonderfully effective program. It teaches ideas and skills that can make the difference between going through the motions and getting where you want to be in life," Riley said. "One of my favorite sayings is, 'Failing to plan is planning to fail.' For every accomplishment, I can look back and see the small steps I had planned and fulfilled leading up to it."

Matt St. John, Director of Operations for Jobs for Maine Graduates, gave the JMG students their vow of membership (initiation). He then installed this year's officers.

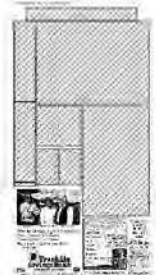
Jewett presented the officers with their certificates.

JMG Volunteer Coordinator Caleb Blanche and Treasurer Abby Redman then presented certificates to the JMG students.

Redman then thanked everyone for their support. Mrs. Jewett, the guest speakers, banner creator Rhonda Peart, and the staff who helped in the kitchen were also thanked.

Blanche then showed a music video, a lip-sync to ABC from the Jackson 5, created by Peter Bussiere to end the evening.

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PAM HARNDEN/LIVERMORE FALLS ADVERTISER

A Ceremony of Initiation and Installation was held Thursday night for students in the [Jobs for Maine Graduates](#) program at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay. This group picture was taken prior to the program.



PAM HARNDEN/LIVERMORE FALLS ADVERTISER

A Ceremony of Initiation and Installation was held Thursday night for students in the Jobs for Maine Graduates program at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay. Guest speaker Alexandria Chretien, a 2016 SMHS graduate, spoke of how the JMG program has helped her.



A Ceremony of Initiation and Installation was held Thursday night for students in the Jobs for Maine Graduates program at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay. Matt St. John, Director of Operations for JMG, is seen leading the vow of membership. The SMHS JMG officers are seen behind him.



PAM HARNDEN/LIVERMORE FALLS ADVERTISER

A Ceremony of Initiation and Installation was held Thursday night for students in the Jobs for Maine Graduates program at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay. Barbara Jewett, the JMG Specialist at SMHS, is seen welcoming students, family members and staff.



A Ceremony of Initiation and Installation was held Thursday night for students in the Jobs for Maine Graduates program at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay. This banner, created by JMG student Rhonda Peart, shows the evening's theme.

Portland Press Herald

Augusta-based Jobs for Maine Graduates Program Teaches Valuable Life Skills

The 22-year-old public-private partnership wins the 2017 Community Service award from the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce.

BY [JASON PAFUNDI](#) Feb. 5, 2017

FARMINGDALE — Sierra Proulx said enrolling in the Jobs for Maine Graduates program at Hall-Dale High School is the greatest thing that's happened in her high school career.

Proulx, 17, said she's learned much from her instructor, Jeremy Porter – including life skills, job skills and things she'll need to know after graduating high school in June. The program also has changed her as a person.



Morgan Ross, left, and Rose Fendley make Valentine's Day cards to be distributed at the Maine Veterans' Home in Augusta during a Jobs for Maine's Graduates class Friday at Hall-Dale High School in Farmingdale. *Joe Phelan/Kennebec Journal*

"I've become the person I am because of JMG," she said. "I've developed job skills and things I'm going to need after high school."

Porter said he's seen Proulx grow because of the program.

"She was quiet and shy, and I don't even know if I knew what her voice sounded like when she was a freshman," Porter said. "Now she's the president of our organization; she's in the National Honor Society; and she plays field hockey. She's made phenomenal growth as a person."

Jobs for Maine Graduates, is a 22-year-old public-private partnership that serves more than 6,500 students a year and helps provide them with the skills and motivation they need to succeed. Last year in the Kennebec Valley, 660 students in nine schools performed 3,200 hours of community service and raised \$12,000 for nonprofit organizations in their communities.

The organization, based in Augusta, received the 2017 Community Service award from the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce at the annual Kenney Awards last month.

“This program is designed to help students who face barriers to education, be it from their home life, economic status, social skills, maturity, health and more,” Porter said. “If you can think of it, we’ve probably dealt with it.”

Porter, in his fourth year as the JMG specialist at Hall-Dale High School, has 60 students who see him for an hour per day a couple of times per week. They work on team building, problem solving, confidence building, resume writing, financial literacy and more.

“We try to cover as much as we can, because most students aren’t getting these things in the school environment,” he said.

In addition to regular classroom work, JMG students around the state – there are 91 programs in Maine – participate in community service projects to learn the importance of giving back.

At Hall-Dale, the students’ big event is hosting the Kennebec County Special Olympics, which happens May 10 this year. Porter said the students plan it, organize it, decorate and learn how to be timers and measurers.

“They do the whole thing,” he said. “They get to work with others who have disabilities, and they love to do it because they know they’re doing something good for someone else.”

Junior Sabrina Freeman, 16, said she learned about the JMG program her freshman year while volunteering with the Special Olympics event. She met Porter that afternoon and decided to join the program at the beginning of her sophomore year.

“It’s helped me learn better leadership and helped me become a better leader,” said Freeman, who is a captain on the school’s soccer and basketball teams.

“People see me as a leader, and I act like a captain and leader instead of just being called one.”

Proulx said helping with Special Olympics is special because she likes giving back to the community. She plans to continue her service to the community when she goes to St. Joseph’s College in Standish next year to study early childhood education.

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Jobs For Maine's Graduates Determined To Help Kids In Need For The Holiday

By Courtney Cortright | Posted: Wed 6:04 PM, Dec 13, 2017 | Updated: Thu 12:00 AM, Dec 14, 2017



SKOWHEGAN, Maine (WABI) - Melanie Clark said, "We are shopping for a 9-year-old boy. He loves Pokémon and Minecraft, all that stuff."

More than thirty Jobs for Maine's Graduates or JMG students filled the aisles of the Walmart in Skowhegan.

Matt Clark said, "We are working in collaboration with Madison and Carrabec to bring Christmas goods to kids that wouldn't have Christmas otherwise."

The program is called Santa's Helpers. JMG helps gather toys for children in need.

"This is my favorite activity that we do. I love giving back to our community, and I love that it goes right back into our school district. All the students that we pick, we pick out from our school district." said Melanie Clark.

The day brings folks from the three towns together with one common bond-the community.

Jackson Lawler-Sidell explained, "My goal is to make as many kids happy as possible because there are a bunch of kids who may not get anything for Christmas. It's nice to know that they can at least have something underneath their tree."

Matt Clark added, "The overall goal is to spread holiday cheer and for kids to get a chance to work inside their community."

It is also a life lesson.

Matt Clark said, "It's really a chance to put their best foot forward and really work to develop and work with the needs inside the community."



No WABI TV5 News At Noon On Wednesday, December 20th



WABI To Begin Saturday And Sunday Morning Newscasts In January



Millinocket Regional Hospital on Partial Lock Down



State Police Assisting Millinocket PD in Investigation of Tuesday Incident



White Christmas at Bangor's Hill House

UPDATE: Police Investigate After Two People Found Injured In Millinocket



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Mentoring program helps Somali refugee succeed

Caroline Cornish, WCSH 9:26 PM. EDT May 17, 2017



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PORTLAND, Maine (NEWS CENTER) -- Anyone who's graduated college knows it's tough to get through without a lot of support. Abdi Abdirahman could soon be the first person in his family to go to law school. It is a goal that never even occurred to him in high school, until he got involved with Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG).

Abdirahman admits he first signed up for JMG at South Portland High School because he thought it would be an easy class. "And what I learned there lasted more than what I learned in my other classes," he said.

Abdirahman's JMG teacher was Randy Inosencio. Abdirahman says Inosencio taught him how to write a resume, how to apply for financial aid in college, and how to apply for scholarships. Abdirahman's family fled the civil war in Somalia when he was 4. He said his parents are big believers in education, but speak very little English themselves. "My parents always pushed us to follow education because they brought us in this country for a better opportunity than they had in Somalia," he said.

Abdirahman started at the University of Maine in Orono, but transferred to the University of Southern Maine to be closer to his family. "My grades weren't the best that first year at UMaine. I think I had a 2.6 GPA and I was just doing things like applying to classes very late, stuff like that," he said.

But in 2015, the Maine Legislature directed JMG to start a college success program. JMG had been able to get most of its students through high school, but many of them found college to be a challenge.

Inosencio moved from South Portland High to USM. He said, "I was walking through campus and I heard, 'Hey! Mr. !!' and I looked back and there he was." It was Abdirahman.

Abdirahman said Inosencio's support made all the difference in getting him through college. "Randy would just remind me, email me 'Hey, class registration's coming up!'"

Inosencio also made sure Abdirahman was aware of networking opportunities when Abdirahman showed an interest in going to law school. Abdirahman said, "I know he's not just my teacher anymore. He's a good friend."

Inosencio said, "Watching him not knowing what he's going to do, and then seeing him walk through college graduation and possibly more is rewarding. It's an exciting day."