

Fiscal Year 2022  
Return to School “Bridge” Programs:  
DPH Line Item #4590-0250

**FY 2022 Funding Request: \$500,000 (\$150,000 increase over FY21)**

About Return to School “Bridge” Programs

The focus of Bridge programs is to ensure that youth who have been out of school for psychiatric or other hospitalizations can successfully transition back to school. Many districts already have these innovative programs, which provide emotional and academic support to students who have missed 5 or more days of school due to a mental health crisis, hospitalization, or serious medical problem. 50% of US high school students with serious mental illness drop out of school. **Bridge programs are changing that script for Massachusetts youth with a short-term intervention that reduces drop-out rates to 8%.**

Throughout the pandemic, Bridge programs continue to help schools create effective and efficient structures for helping students struggling with serious mental health and other medical challenges achieve success. Bridge programs have been working with school and district leaders, and entire school faculties across Massachusetts, to integrate school wide strategies and supports to promote mental health and equity for all students and families. The Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) School Support team, which provides training and TA to all bridge programs in the state, has been helping the 140 existing BRYT programs in Massachusetts navigate this shift through customized technical assistance, cross-school cohort meetings and professional learning opportunities, and on-call consultation.

Why funding is needed

The funds will enable the continuation of direct support for students struggling with serious mental health challenges, made possible by supporting Bridge program staff in schools (clinicians and academic coordinators) in adjusting their roles and developing skills needed to work effectively during this period.

Updates

FY21 GAA	FY22 Ask	FY22 Governor	FY22 House	FY22 Senate	Conference
\$350K	\$500K	No earmark	No earmark	\$500K	