

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Please contact Bob Bardwell, Director of School Counseling at 267-4589x1109 for more information.

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# **New England Reach Higher Convening Set for August 16, 2016**

The first ever New England Reach Higher Convening will take place at Assumption College in Worcester, MA on Tuesday, August 16, 2015 from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. The title for the Convening is *Reaching Higher in New England: Increasing Postsecondary Opportunities for All Students*.

This regional convening is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's [Reach Higher initiative](#), a national program that was launched in 2014 to ensure more students graduate from high school and continue on to earn some sort of additional certificate, degree or training after graduating from high school.

Over the course of the day, participants will engage in conversations with members of the national Reach Higher initiative, panel discussions and breakout sessions that explore what Reach Higher is and ways to implement Reach Higher programs and activities in their schools, organizations or states. This convening will bring together leaders and practitioners in the field from all six New England states. Over 100 school counselors, K-12 school district leaders, school counselor educators, college access professionals, financial aid administrators, college admission officers, higher education leaders, policy makers and business leaders are expected to attend. Participants will also be part of work alike groups focusing on their job duties and state level discussions about Reach Higher initiatives and activities in each of the six New England states.

The keynote speaker for the convening is Joshua Steckel, author of *Hold Fast to Dreams: A College Counselor, His Students, and the Vision of a Life Beyond Poverty*. Josh is a school counselor in the New York City public schools, and a leading writer, speaker and practitioner in the field of college access and success. *Hold Fast to Dreams* chronicles the experiences of ten of his former students, all of whom are first in their families to go to college. The students have the academic ability to be successful in college, but lack the supports necessary to navigate the often complex and overwhelming college and financial aid application processes. Steckel's talk will clearly articulate the importance of the Reach Higher Initiative in ensuring opportunity in higher education for all students

There is no cost to attend but participants must register at [www.risla.com/reach-higher-2016](http://www.risla.com/reach-higher-2016) by July 29.

Anyone who is involved with preparing students to graduate from high school or the transition from high school to higher education and training is urged to attend.

For more information about the event please contact Bob Bardwell at 267.4589x1109 or [bardwellr@monsonschools.com](mailto:bardwellr@monsonschools.com).

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