GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning
A SPECIAL THANKS

CONNECTICUT
- Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of Education
- George Coleman, Deputy Commissioner of Education
- Barbara Beaudin, Associate Commissioner of Education
- Karen Addesso, Education Consultant, Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation
- Andrea Stillman, State Senator • Deputy Majority Leader
- Toni Boucher, State Senator • Senate Education Committee Member
- Tom Reynolds, State Representative • Vice Chair of the House Education Committee
- Jay Yoss, Co-Chair of the State Board of Education
- Debra Borrero, Policy and Legislative Affairs Liaison to Governor Rell
- Mike Meotti, Commissioner of Higher Education
- Diane Ullman, Superintendent of Schools, Simsbury

RHODE ISLAND
- Deborah Gist, Commissioner of Education
- Andrea Castaneda, Accelerating School Performance Division Chief
- Sharon Lee, Director of the Office of Multiple Pathways
- Louis DiPalma, State Senator • Senate Education Committee Member
- Joseph McNamara, State Representative • Chair of the House Education Committee
- Colleen Callahan, Secretary of the State Board of Regents
- Janet Durfee-Hidalgo, Education Policy Advisor to Governor Carcieri
- Brion Carroll, Director of the Lifespan Learning Institute

MAINE
- Angela Faherty, Commissioner of Education
- Wanda Monthey, Department of Education Policy Director
- Dan Hupp, State Director of Assessment and Standards
- Lora Downing, Career and Technical Education State Director
- Justin Allford, State Senator • Chair of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
- Mary Nelson, State Representative • Education and Cultural Affairs Committee Member
- James Banks, Chair of the State Board of Education
- Deborah Friedman, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Baldacci
- Al Noyes, President of Walch Publishing

VERMONT
- Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner of Education
- Rae Ann Knopf, Deputy Commissioner of Education
- John Fischer, Director of Secondary Education
- Peter Peltz, State Representative • House Education Committee Member
- Kathy Larsen, Vice Chair of the Vermont Board of Education
- Tim Donovan, Chancellor of Vermont State Colleges
- David Coriell, Special Assistant to Governor Douglas
- Tami Esbjerg, Proprietor of Studio di Disegno

NEW HAMPSHIRE
- Virginia Barry, Commissioner of Education
- Paul Leather, Deputy Commissioner of Education
- Molly Kelly, State Senator • Chair of the Senate Committee on Education
- Emma Rous, State Representative • Chair of the House Committee on Education
- John Lyons, Chair of the New Hampshire State Board of Education
- Christen Lavers, Special Assistant for Policy to Governor Lynch
- Fred Kocher, President of Kocher & Company, Inc.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS
- Nicholas Donohue, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation
- Jacob Ludes, Executive Director of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Michael Thomas, President and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education

The authors of this tool would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the New England Secondary School Consortium Council, our regional steering committee, for the support and leadership it has provided during the first year of our existence. As champions for the vision, mission, and goals of the Consortium, our Council has been instrumental in making our work—including this resource—a success.
ABOUT THIS TOOL

Global Best Practices: An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning is a practical, action-oriented tool for teachers, school administrators, superintendents, school boards, parents, and other members of a school community. The tool grew out of a recognition that national borders no longer define the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that students need for success, and that New England’s high schools may need assistance reviewing learning standards, organizational structures, leadership models, teaching strategies, professional development, and student outcomes in relation to research on high-performing educational systems and practices. Global Best Practices is a first step toward defining, in detail, the characteristics of effective 21st century education and applying them to the creation of new models of teaching, learning, and leading in today’s high schools.

This tool distills some common characteristics of high-performing schools in the United States and abroad, and presents them in a concise, user-friendly format. Rather than give school leaders and teachers a simple list of recommendations, the tool offers a practical, step-by-step process that schools can use to assess their relative performance in key areas and shape their school-improvement plans. Global Best Practices is intended to make this important research more accessible and useful to the schools and educators of New England.

Global Best Practices will be revised and updated as new research and strategies emerge, and as we receive feedback from practitioners who are using the tool in their schools. If you have recommendations for strengthening this resource, we strongly encourage you to submit suggestions to gbpfeedback@newenglandssc.org.

STRANDS + DIMENSIONS

Global Best Practices is organized into three main strands, each with its own subsections, or dimensions. The strands identify broad areas of focus that every school community should address in its improvement work, while the numbered dimensions are intended to guide in-depth investigations into specific issues or strategies. Each dimension includes comprehensive descriptions that define the concept being explored, as well as a selection of sample strategies and evidence to provide relevant examples of specific policies, practices, and outcomes that schools can consider and reflect on.

TEACHING + LEARNING
1.1 Equity
1.2 Personalization + Relevance
1.3 Academic Expectations
1.4 Standards-Based Education
1.5 Assessment Practices
1.6 International + Multicultural Learning
1.7 Technology Integration
1.8 Learning Communities

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN
2.1 Vision, Mission + Action Plan
2.2 School Culture
2.3 Multiple Pathways
2.4 Transitions
2.5 Interventions + Support
2.6 Time + Space
2.7 Data Systems + Applications
2.8 Continual Improvement

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
3.1 Teacher Recruitment + Retention
3.2 Administrative Leadership
3.3 Shared Leadership
3.4 Moral Courage
Global Best Practices is a comprehensive tool designed to equip schools with a thoughtful process for in-depth professional and institutional self-reflection. While schools are encouraged to work through all twenty dimensions in this resource, it is not necessary to tackle the entire process all at once. Schools may choose a particular strand—such as Teaching + Learning, for example—or a selection of dimensions relevant to their action plan, and then work through these sections first. The process can also be broken up over multiple months, semesters, or years. The most important thing is that schools use this document in ways that work best for them—there is no “right” or “wrong” way to use this tool.

The pages that follow are intentionally structured to be simple, straightforward, and easy to follow. Each numbered dimension offers a detailed profile of a foundational concept or strategy, and a four-step process schools can follow to investigate and reflect on their performance in a particular area. The instructions here will walk your school through the four steps.

**STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**

In Step 1, schools review descriptions of the three performance levels. Keep in mind that these performance levels are merely concise profiles of high schools at various stages of a school-improvement process. Your school may closely resemble one of the descriptions (or it may not), or it could be implementing different elements of all three levels. The purpose of this step is not to force your school into any one category, but to provoke thoughtful, self-reflective faculty discussions about where your school is on a school-improvement continuum. At this time, the educators engaged in the self-assessment can pose questions to one another, take notes, and identify data, documents, or other resources that should be consulted to provide a more detailed picture of what your school is or is not doing in the dimension.

**STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES**

In Step 2, schools are provided a list of sample research-based strategies for school improvement. In some cases, your school may already be implementing one or more of the sample strategies; in others, none of the strategies will apply. The list is intended to give schools a sense of the kinds of organizational or instructional practices that are aligned with the dimension and help to explain it in greater detail. These examples offer a range of potential strategies schools might consider if it is determined that work needs to be undertaken in a particular area. Once the list has been reviewed and discussed (either in multiple small groups or as a large group), schools record the specific strategies being implemented in their school to improve student outcomes, instructional quality, or organizational effectiveness in the dimension. We recommend that schools describe the major features of a strategy (i.e., what makes it effective) when recording it during Step 2. If the space provided is insufficient, schools can record their strategies on a separate sheet of paper.
In Step 3, schools review a list of sample evidence that illustrates the kind of data or outcomes schools should look for to determine if school-improvement strategies have had a positive impact on student performance or the school itself. It is not enough to have implemented a strategy; schools need to know how strategies are impacting students. Again, your school may already be seeing the kinds of results reflected in the list or it may not—the examples are merely intended to give schools a general sense of the types of evidence, whether quantitative or qualitative, they might want to consider or investigate to assess progress in the dimension. It is important that schools strive to record only objective, empirical data and evidence, not subjective perceptions or wishful thinking. If, for example, the sample evidence refers to student surveys, and your school has not conducted student surveys, participating educators should not fill in the blank space with what they may believe to be the case. Anecdotal evidence may be sufficient if confirmed by multiple individuals and supported by several specific examples. If your school does not have any concrete evidence of performance or progress in the dimension, then the next step may be a collective decision to consider collecting and tracking relevant data. The goal of this step is to determine what your school already knows—or needs to find out—about your performance in a given area.

In Step 4, schools reflect on the performance descriptions, strategies, and evidence they have reviewed and discussed, and then place themselves on the continuum of school improvement described in the dimension. The score recorded for your school should reflect a collective consensus that has resulted from an open, honest, and frank discussion. One option is to bring together a representative cross-section of school staff and ask them to complete a self-assessment individually. After all the scores are compiled, determine the mean score and discuss, as a group, why different individuals came up with different scores. Keep in mind that a self-assessment score is not a perfect measure of performance in the dimension, but only a useful guide when engaging in the substantive work of school improvement. If you determine that your school is on the lower end of the continuum, don’t be disheartened—a low score should not be seen as evidence of failure or a cause for blame, just as a higher score should not become an excuse to rest on your laurels and stop learning and growing as a community of professionals.
GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

1 This tool does not provide an exhaustive list of performance evidence or strategies, and the descriptions are only intended to be representative, not all-inclusive. Many examples of effective teaching and learning are not represented in these pages—not because they are unimportant, but because of the limitations of formatting and page space.

2 The sections and dimensions in this tool focus attention on a selection of important concepts and high-impact areas to provide schools with a logical structure and process to follow. Obviously, real schools are not neatly organized into clear categories, educational research is unable to take every influence and factor into account, and systemic school-improvement never unfolds according to a perfectly charted step-by-step process. Schools are complex, interdependent learning communities with unique qualities and characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, teachers and students—which means that no tool or process, no matter how well devised, will be able to anticipate or address every need.

3 Global Best Practices is a research-based tool that is guided by an unwavering belief in educational equity—giving every student a fair chance to succeed in life. The tool assumes that every graduate should leave high school equipped with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind needed to succeed in a four-year postsecondary-degree program and in the globally competitive careers of the 21st century. By proceeding on this assumption, the Consortium is not advocating that students be forced to attend college or that enrolling in college is the best choice for every student. Rather, we are advocating that secondary schools apply universally high standards and expectations regardless of a student’s background or professed aspirations. Since few adolescents know what they want to do with their lives, and few adults, for that matter, can confidently say that they knew their educational and career path at the age of fourteen, it is our belief that high schools should endeavor to expand life opportunities for students, not foreclose on them prematurely.

4 While many educators and policy makers have recently begun emphasizing the importance of international benchmarking, there is still no consensus on the precise definition of this term or how international benchmarking can be effectively conducted in high schools. In this tool, both domestic and international research studies were considered, and the descriptions and strategies presented in these pages are an attempt to distill the most relevant findings. Instead of simply importing international research with little thought given to the particular characteristics of American schools, we have made efforts to translate this research in ways that will be familiar to American educators. Just as a literal translation of a foreign-language text will produce a clunky, unreadable document, we have endeavored to convert research findings into logical guidance that is appropriate to American educational contexts. And given the vagaries of cultural context, educational research conducted in the United States will be the most relevant to American schools. For more information about the research that informs this tool, consult the Global Best Practices literature review.
USING THE PRIORITY GUIDE

Once your school has completed a section or worked through all twenty of the individual self-assessments, you can use the priority guide on this page to help determine school-improvement priorities and next steps. The guide is merely a graphical aid that will give schools a visual overview of how each individual self-assessment was scored, which can be helpful in determining priorities—if a school scores lower in one dimension than another, it may indicate a weakness or need that should be addressed. The scoring scale used throughout this tool is not an absolute measure of performance, and school leaders must be thoughtful and judicious when determining school priorities as they consider numerous contextual, political, financial, and personal factors that extend well beyond the purview of this tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHING + LEARNING</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Equity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Personalization + Relevance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Academic Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Standards-Based Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Assessment Practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 International + Multicultural Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Technology Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Learning Communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Vision, Mission + Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 School Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Multiple Pathways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Transitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Interventions + Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Time + Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Data Systems + Applications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Continual Improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Teacher Recruitment + Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Administrative Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Shared Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Moral Courage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.1 EQUITY

#### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic, social, and aspirational inequities across the student body may have been identified, but no formal or strategic actions have been undertaken to address them. Underperforming students (defined as performing below grade level) typically fail to catch up to their peers, and school data indicate that these students generally come from economically, socially, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The school's courses, curricula, and instruction do not promote common high expectations for all students. The academic program is a complex hierarchy of tiered tracks and teachers are not trained in classroom differentiation or other personalization strategies. Student performance and behavioral data are collected and reviewed at the school level, but individual and student-subgroup data are not disaggregated or analyzed. While all students have access to enriching school activities and co-curricular programs, actual participation patterns reveal that disadvantaged students participate at significantly lower rates. Some staff members, parents, and community members display considerable resistance to adopting strategies that would promote a more equitable school structure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inequities across the student body are monitored regularly, at least annually. The school is beginning to use disaggregated data and formative assessments to identify individual student needs. The school offers some support opportunities to academically struggling students, but interventions are not systemic or integrated into regular courses. Some academic tracks have been eliminated, but barriers to accessing higher-level courses remain in place. A small number of staff, parents, and community members remain resistant to adopting strategies that promote greater equity. Participation in enriching school activities and co-curricular programs is relatively consistent across the student body, including those students who may have formerly been disengaged. Student voice and personalization are considered when programs are developed or refined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school community has embraced the belief that all students can succeed. Teachers actively promote positive self-images and high academic expectations for all students. Every student is enrolled in academically rigorous, college-preparatory courses, and the school does not offer “watered-down” or outdated courses that do not prepare students for success in college or modern careers. Classroom instruction goes beyond more traditional didactic practices to include personalized, student-centered strategies that engage and support diverse learning styles. Course expectations—including those for assignments, assessments, and grading—are explicit and public. A coherent system of performance monitoring and student interventions promotes academic acceleration (not traditional remediation) for both underperforming and high-performing students. A variety of academic options and graduation pathways provide opportunities for students to participate in the design of their own personalized educational experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES**

**SAMPLE STRATEGIES**

- Enroll all students in untracked, heterogeneously grouped classes, and train all teachers in differentiated instruction and the use of formative assessment to identify and meet individual learning needs.
- Leverage additional school resources—whether human, financial, material, instructional, or experiential—to help overcome the disadvantages of social background for underperforming, at-risk, and minority students, including pairing the most effective and experienced teachers with the most underprivileged students.
- Remove barriers (such as prerequisites) that might prevent or discourage students from taking more challenging courses (including Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate options) or meeting basic admission requirements for college prior to graduation.
- Create a coherent system of interventions to ensure that struggling students receive the academic and personal support they need to not only perform at grade level, but also to succeed in higher-level courses (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, co-curricular activities).
- Regularly communicate with all parents—particularly parents from low-income or other disadvantaged households—while proactively encouraging their participation in school governance, activities, and programs.
- Establish a school-wide system for monitoring student performance and socialization issues, and have guidance counselors work closely with teachers to provide practical and timely college and career guidance to all students.

**OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION**

**STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE**

**SAMPLE EVIDENCE**

- No significant achievement or aspiration gaps exist among students from different cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, linguistic, or special-needs backgrounds.
- Underperforming ninth-grade students are performing at or above grade level by the end of tenth grade.
- Student participation in electives, higher-level courses, and co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities is consistent across all student subgroups.
- College-enrollment rates are high, even among first-generation students from families with no college-going history.

**OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION**
### Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers use a limited repertoire of instructional strategies. Curriculum design and lesson planning reflect whole-group learning targets with little personalization or differentiation. The school is not organized to provide personalized learning or mitigate performance gaps, and teachers do not have timely access to data on individual student learning needs or progress. In-depth inquiry, student collaboration, and the application of real-world skills are absent from most courses and lessons.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The school’s vision and mission have been revised to reflect a school-wide commitment to serving all students. Teachers are actively learning about personalization and differentiation. Most teachers have received professional development and support for using formative assessments, new learning technologies, and student-centered strategies that can help identify student needs and increase academic personalization. Courses are still fairly traditional, classroom-based experiences, but teachers are beginning to use instructional practices proven to engage diverse types of learners. The school has implemented an advisory structure for students, but both students and teachers report that the time is not being used effectively.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The faculty has made a bold public commitment to creating a student-centered culture and learning environment, and personalized instructional strategies designed to meet the intellectual, developmental, social, and emotional needs of every student reflect this commitment. Teachers regularly review student data to diagnose learning needs and improve instructional practice. The school has implemented systems (such as advisories) that help teachers get to know their students well. The school provides a variety of curriculum options, universal access to digital technologies, and multiple learning pathways both within and outside of the classroom. Students take a proactive role in designing their own education and planning for future learning. By using personal learning plans, portfolios, rubrics, online course-management tools, or other strategies, teachers help students manage their own educational experience. Teachers and school leaders regularly communicate with parents, encourage their involvement in the academic life of their children, and use Web-based tools to ensure that parents are knowledgeable about their children’s academic progress. Classroom instruction emphasizes real-world concepts and applications, including hands-on learning, problem solving, research, technological literacy, and current national and international issues.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 4 >> Score Your School

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Ensure that all courses, syllabi, lessons, and instructional strategies are developmentally appropriate and informed by educational and cognitive research.
- Disaggregate and analyze multiple sources of data to determine the needs of individual students and student subgroups.
- Engage all students in co-designing challenging, long-term projects that culminate in a public exhibition. (In addition to more traditional research and writing projects, these can include community-based learning, service learning, internships, and other alternative-learning options.)
- Conduct classroom observations on an ongoing basis and regularly analyze up-to-date information about the academic performance and socialization of individual students.
- Provide professional development so all teachers can differentiate instruction and personalize learning.
- Provide multiple pathways for students to meet learning standards, including extended learning opportunities (internships, community-based volunteerism, etc.), online courses, and dual enrollment experiences.

SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- Student surveys and comments indicate a high degree of academic engagement, satisfaction with their teachers, and a strong desire to continue learning beyond high school.
- A significant percentage of the student body participates in internships, volunteerism, and other community-based learning opportunities, and participation is consistent across all student subgroups.
- Absences, expulsions, behavioral issues, and dropout rates are declining.
- Course failures during the ninth and tenth grades have declined dramatically.

OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
## 1.3 ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are often engaged in time-consuming, lower-skill activities that add relatively little tangible academic value to the school day. Course-enrollment patterns reveal that low-achieving students from disadvantaged households tend to be enrolled in less-challenging courses that are taught by new or less-qualified teachers. Most classroom-based assessments rely on multiple-choice questions that measure only content knowledge and basic skills. Teachers infrequently engage students in long-term projects, complex problem solving, and other tasks that require the application of knowledge and higher-level reasoning skills. Remedial courses deliver less-rigorous instruction at a slower pace, and underperforming students are not always given the additional time they need to catch up to their peers. Special-education students are often separated from their peers, and the stigma associated with this label tends to reinforce negative self-images of academic or personal potential.</td>
<td>The lowest academic tracks have been eliminated, and most students are enrolled in college-preparatory courses. Prerequisites for higher-level courses—including honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual-enrollment courses—have been removed so that any motivated student can access challenging learning experiences regardless of past academic performance. School leaders and teachers have reviewed the academic program and eliminated outdated or nonessential courses. Some teachers are collaborating to develop interdisciplinary courses that explore concepts from multiple perspectives, but these opportunities are not accessible to all students. Student data are analyzed to identify underachieving students, and teachers are investigating and using intervention strategies focused on learning acceleration (not remediation), but these support strategies are not yet integrated into regular courses and coursework.</td>
<td>The administration and faculty have developed a common definition of academic rigor that is based on real-world learning needs, including research on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in demanding postsecondary-degree programs and globally competitive modern careers. A concise set of academic objectives has been clearly articulated for every course and communicated to every student. Most units and lessons are thematic, cross-curricular, and explicitly address &quot;21st century skills,&quot; such as finding and organizing information to solve problems, planning and conducting long-term investigations, analyzing and synthesizing data, applying knowledge and skills in new situations, self-monitoring and self-directing, communicating and writing well, and working independently and in teams. Students are given time to investigate ideas in depth, and all students are engaged in long-term projects, exhibitions, and other performance-based demonstrations of learning. A variety of instructional strategies allow students to learn at their own pace and in ways that work most effectively for them. Teachers utilize interactive instructional techniques and regularly collaborate on intensive projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in this dimension.

- [ ] NOT ADDRESSED
- [ ] INITIATING
- [ ] DEVELOPING
- [ ] PERFORMING
**STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES**

**SAMPLE STRATEGIES**

- Ensure that course sequences are based on developmental learning progressions and are aligned across grades to eliminate content gaps and repetitions.
- Engage all students in intensive, long-term, in-depth lessons and projects, rather than content review or extended text-based activities.
- Treat all students as if they are college-bound: require every student to take a nationally recognized college-entrance exam (SAT, ACT), apply to at least one postsecondary-degree program, and complete the Common Application for Undergraduate Admission and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- Offer a college-planning program for parents that begins in the ninth grade, especially for parents from disadvantaged households, and provide a variety of workshops, materials, and assistance strategies to ensure these families have the information and practical guidance they need to encourage, support, and finance their children’s postsecondary education.
- Engage community mentors and local experts to support students working on intensive, long-term projects.

**OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION**

**STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE**

**SAMPLE EVIDENCE**

- Scores on standardized tests and local assessments are rising, particularly among traditionally underperforming student subgroups.
- The number of first-generation and low-income students enrolling in and completing postsecondary-degree programs has increased dramatically, and the percentage of graduates needing remedial coursework in college has decreased.
- A high percentage of students graduate with a strong set of demonstrated academic and real-world skills, as evidenced by college acceptances, scholarships, travel plans, grant awards, community-service awards, internship offers, or other recognitions and opportunities that are a direct extension of their high school work.

**OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION**
## 1.4 STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

### Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some efforts have been made to align coursework with career and college-ready learning standards, but in practice many teachers continue to use lessons that are unaligned or outdated. The school uses a standardized credit system based on seat time, letter grades, number averaging, and other traditional practices to measure academic progress and determine readiness for graduation. There is a great deal of variation from classroom to classroom in grading practices and standards. Students are often unaware of learning expectations for courses and lessons, and they rarely receive descriptive feedback on assignments. High-stakes external assessments often unilaterally drive instruction and lesson design.</td>
<td>School-wide curricula and instruction have been aligned with common learning standards, but this effort has not been systematic or systemic. District and school leaders have engaged in conversations about adopting a true standards-based system, and the principal and teacher-leaders have visited schools that are using effective standards-based practices. Teachers are employing multiple formative assessment strategies in the classroom, and academic support is being provided to ensure that struggling students have learned material before they move on to the next lesson. Some departments have developed common rubrics to enhance the consistency of grading and reporting, but this practice has not been embraced by all teachers or institutionalized school-wide. In some cases, learning expectations remain unclear and many students are still unaware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses or which learning standards teachers are addressing.</td>
<td>The school has publicly committed to becoming a true standards-based learning community, and graduation policy has been modified to require all students to demonstrate mastery of learning standards and high levels of college and career readiness before receiving a diploma. The faculty has prioritized learning standards in every content area so that the most essential content, skills, and habits of mind are covered in depth before teachers move on to additional material and standards. Multiple assessments are used to determine that students have mastered what they have been taught, and underperforming students are provided with additional instructional time, academic support, and alternative learning options to ensure that they are able to learn and demonstrate achievement in ways that work best for them. All teachers use common scoring guides that provide detailed descriptions of required learning proficiencies at each developmental stage and expected level of performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 4 >> Score Your School

Place an **X** on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in this dimension.

1. **NOT ADDRESSED**
2. **INITIATING**
3. **DEVELOPING**
4. **PERFORMING**
## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Use curriculum mapping to align coursework not only with state standards, but also with companion standards that address local needs, regional issues, college readiness, and preparation for globally competitive 21st century careers. Make completed curriculum maps and other course materials accessible online.
- Develop a communication strategy and related materials that clearly describe the advantages and details of your standards-based system for prospective students, parents, colleges, and employers.
- Engage the entire faculty in collaboratively creating common rubrics and assessments that promote greater coherence and comparability across grade levels and course curricula.
- Require teachers to use the same reporting processes and online student-information system to centralize and streamline grading and reporting.
- Utilize thematic, interdisciplinary instruction built around long-term investigative projects that require students to apply knowledge and solve complex, real-world problems.
- Ensure that your school’s standards-based reporting system can be readily translated to meet standard college-application requirements, including a GPA-conversion formula and materials that explain the standards-based reporting system to admissions personnel.

## OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION

- Student scores on standardized tests and assessments are rising, particularly among traditionally underperforming subgroups.
- There are no significant performance gaps among students from different socioeconomic, cultural, or special-needs backgrounds.
- College-remediation rates among recent graduates are low and college-persistence rates are high or rising.
- Nearly all students are performing at or above grade level by the end of tenth grade.
1.5 ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>INITIATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school primarily uses a “one-size-fits-all” approach to assessment, and most assessments employ fixed-response, selected-response, and multiple-choice questions that primarily measure recall. The assessment literacy of teachers is limited, and many are unaware of research-based assessment strategies or the impact that varied assessment strategies can have on student learning. When students struggle to demonstrate what they have learned, assessment practices seldom change when students are retested. Teacher feedback often lacks clear guidance that will help students recognize learning needs and progress toward proficiency. Student learning is assessed infrequently, and assessment data are rarely used to modify instructional strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More teachers are employing multiple assessment strategies in the classroom, but these practices are unevenly applied across the school and only occasionally result in personalized instructional modifications. Faculties are supported in increasing their understanding of assessment design and in matching assessments to specified learning goals. The school has started using more innovative assessment strategies—including exhibitions and portfolios—but many student projects display a lack of academic rigor, sophistication, or intellectual curiosity. The school has provided a few professional development opportunities to improve faculty understanding of effective assessment design and how assessment strategies can also be a learning tool for teachers and students. Assessment data is being reviewed and analyzed sporadically to inform instructional practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teaching faculty has embraced assessment as a critical component of the learning process. The school has created a coherent system of varied, curriculum-embedded assessments that are aligned with standards and designed to capture a broad range of student learning. Teachers have received training in using assessments to identify and respond to student learning needs and are skilled in the use of diagnostic assessment. Formative, performance-based assessment strategies are used in every classroom throughout the school year to identify emerging student needs so that teachers can modify instruction and coordinate support before students fall behind. Performance assessments and demonstrations of learning are challenging, relevant, and model real-life situations and applications. Learning expectations are clearly communicated to all students at the beginning of courses and lessons, and students understand the assessment methods used by teachers. Teachers provide specific, detailed, and timely oral and written feedback to students on their learning strengths and weaknesses. Students are provided with differentiated assessment opportunities, where appropriate, so that they have ample opportunity to exhibit learning using multiple approaches. Equitable assessment practices ensure that all students have the time, resources, and support they need to demonstrate proficiency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

1 2 3 4 5
NOT ADDRESSED INITIATING DEVELOPING PERFORMING
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Employ multiple assessment strategies and sources of evidence throughout the school year, including performance-based assessments, selected and constructed responses, questioning strategies, teacher observation, personal communication, self-assessments, student portfolios (including Web-based portfolios), and public exhibitions of student work. Based on these assessments, teachers provide meaningful, actionable feedback to students.
- Ensure that formative and summative performance-based assessments utilize open-ended questions and multi-step problem solving that require students to analyze problems, apply knowledge, think critically, and write extensively.
- Design assessment instruments and tasks so that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency, including English-language learners and students with special needs.
- Evaluate assessments to prioritize depth over breadth and determine if assessments are designed to show how students have mastered essential knowledge, skills, and habits of mind.
- Create opportunities for individual faculty members and professional learning groups to research proven assessment strategies, share best practices, and integrate them into practice.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- The administrative team and faculty can cite critical student-performance data by content area, grade level, and student subgroup.
- There are no significant performance gaps among students from different socioeconomic, cultural, or special-needs backgrounds.
- Student exhibitions evidence high levels of creativity, innovation, intellectual sophistication, and applied skills.
- Parents—particularly those from first-generation, low-income, and other disadvantaged households—are informed about their child’s academic progress, understand the standards and methods of assessing mastery of standards, and are engaged in helping their children succeed academically.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
## International + Multicultural Learning

### Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some teachers rely on outdated textbooks and learning materials that primarily espouse an American or Eurocentric point of view. The school only offers instruction in one or two European languages, and there are no alternative options for students interested in learning other world languages. History and social science courses focus primarily on the American experience and rarely explore the emerging global interconnectedness of societies and cultures. The school’s vision and mission do not address international learning or multicultural awareness. Students and teachers have reported incidences of racial, ethnic, and religious slurs being used during or outside of school. English-language learners spend most of the day in separate classes, and students, parents, and community members from other countries are rarely invited to share their backgrounds and experiences with students.</td>
<td>School leaders and teachers recognize the importance of exposing students to global issues and perspectives, and the school’s action plan outlines specific objectives for expanding international-learning opportunities for students. The school has added new world-language courses and is working to forge partnerships with regional high schools and local colleges to enhance world-language opportunities. The school offers programs designed to increase multicultural understanding among staff and students, but these opportunities are often elective, offered after normal school hours, or unconnected to curriculum and instruction. Teachers make efforts to recognize and honor the cultural diversity of their students, and lessons are often modified to include material relevant to the social and cultural backgrounds represented in the class. ELL students, immigrant families, well-traveled students, and leaders of local cultural institutions are occasionally invited to present their experiences in classes. Students increasingly participate in exchange programs, travel-abroad opportunities, volunteerism, internships, leadership programs, and other opportunities that expose them to different societies and cultures.</td>
<td>Enhancing student understanding of international issues and world cultures is not only an explicitly stated goal of the school, but school leaders and staff have made a concerted effort to incorporate international knowledge, cultural diversity, and global values into all programs and learning opportunities. Students have access to a variety of world-language learning options and experiences. International issues and perspectives are emphasized across the content areas and embedded in the curriculum and learning materials, particularly in world history, geography, anthropology, literature, art, culture, economics, politics, and current-event lessons. Humanities, history, and social studies courses go beyond “flags, fun, food, and festivals” to explore the global interconnectedness and interdependence of societies, cultures, and economies. Learning opportunities designed to foster a greater understanding of diverse cultures and belief systems are integrated into the school day and into co-curricular programs. Students, parents, and staff who are members of immigrant or minority groups are seen as valued community resources and are often called upon to share their expertise and experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 4 >> Score Your School

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Addressed</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Recognize culturally important themes and events, particularly those that reflect the diversity and interests of the student body.
- Increase world-language course offerings, and coordinate with other schools, colleges, or cultural institutions in the region to share world-language educators and resources, or to provide online and distance-learning courses in languages for which a full-time hire may be impractical or infeasible.
- Emphasize challenging issues with global ramifications in science courses, such as climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, fisheries depletion, deforestation, and food and water shortages.
- Make use of visiting lecturers, service-learning projects, sister-school programs, student and faculty exchange programs, and virtual exchange programs to expose students to different cultures, increase multicultural understanding among students, and internationalize curriculum and instruction.
- Ensure that courses and co-curricular programs address problems and challenges that result from racism, discrimination, ethnic conflict, and religious intolerance.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

---

## STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- The number of students enrolling in and passing non-traditional Advanced Placement world-language courses (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, and Arabic) has increased.
- The engagement, performance, and co-curricular participation of the school’s English-language learners have increased significantly, as has participation in school activities among immigrant or minority families.
- There is no evidence of student violence, bullying, or behavioral issues stemming from racial, ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic differences among students.
- Student coursework and assessments demonstrate a strong understanding of local, national, and global issues.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION

---
**TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION**

**STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATING</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to computers and online resources is limited due to scheduling issues, and inadequate supply of computers, outdated hardware and software, or a lack of skilled technical support. The school is not wireless and persistent technical issues occasionally shut down or disable the network. The faculty does not use common online applications to plan, organize, and manage courses, or to track student data related to lessons, performance, and demographics. The school does not provide professional development in the use of new digital learning technologies, and some teachers remain uncomfortable using digital learning applications in the classroom. The school does not have a long-range technology plan.</td>
<td>The school has a computer lab equipped with new computers, a variety of learning software, and a full-time learning-technology specialist, but an insufficient supply of computers, scheduling issues, and other minor problems limit teacher and student access to technology. Teachers are growing increasingly skilled in using digital tools and applications, but these practices are often limited to online researching, word processing, emailing, and other basic strategies. A few teachers in the school are highly skilled in using technology to increase student engagement and performance, but the school does not provide structured opportunities for advanced practitioners to model instruction or share best practices with their colleagues. Most students take at least one general course in digital and online literacy prior to graduation, but the school does not offer courses in practical technology skills—such as computer programming, digital photography, or graphic design—and computer skills are only occasionally integrated into regular courses. A secure, stable network provides reliable connectivity throughout the school facility.</td>
<td>Technology use across the school is transformative, changing the way that teachers teach and students learn. The school is a one-to-one learning environment, and each student has a laptop computer that can be used throughout the school day and after school hours. Student learning extends beyond the classroom to include real-world tasks or communication with experts outside of the school. Teachers take advantage of course-management software, a common student-information system, open-source applications, and other digital tools to facilitate the planning, organization, and communication within and across courses. The faculty consciously promotes and models digital citizenship and online responsibility, including respect for intellectual property, appropriate documentation of online sources, and ethical conduct and safety in online social interactions. Learning technologies and online resources are used on a daily basis in most courses, and every teacher has developed strategies to effectively integrate digital tools into their pedagogy. Technology is used to engage students in sophisticated knowledge construction, complex problem solving, peer collaboration, and the virtual exploration of global issues, and every student is required to demonstrate a high level of technological literacy prior to graduation. A strategic, long-range technology plan takes into account emerging needs and increases technology resources over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

1. NOT ADDRESSED
2. INITIATING
3. DEVELOPING
4. PERFORMING
5. PERFORMING
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Post all syllabi, assignments, and course materials online.
- Require students to maintain online portfolios of their work and use course-management software to stay informed about their courses and to communicate electronically with teachers and peers.
- Encourage teachers to create and publish online videos, podcasts, slideshows, blogs, and other digital resources that help students contextualize content, apply knowledge, and learn more effectively.
- Use videoconferencing, chatting, social-networking sites, and other online communication technologies to create virtual-exchange experiences that expose students to experts and peers across the country and around the world.
- Create an online “repository of best practices” to facilitate the sharing of professional literature, effective lessons, instructional materials, and teaching strategies across content areas and grade levels.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- Student exhibitions display a sophisticated understanding of new learning technologies: e.g., students have created films, musical compositions, science experiments, and new software programs using digital tools.
- Students regularly participate in technology-based projects outside of the classroom, including high-tech internships, online entrepreneurship, and technical-support services for the school community and local organizations.
- Teachers have an in-depth understanding of student learning needs that would not have been possible without the aid of databases, online resources, and other digital applications that allow them to disaggregate data and communicate more effectively with students and parents.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING

Teaching practice is largely individualistic and uninformed by current research, collegial feedback, formative assessments, or student data. Classroom doors are generally closed and faculty members rarely observe one another teaching or have focused discussions about specific instructional strategies or student needs. The administrative team is largely focused on managerial responsibilities, and only a limited amount of time is devoted to investigating proven best practices, analyzing student-performance trends, and participating in professional learning. School policies do not explicitly support ongoing professional learning, and teacher schedules and workloads do not provide time for collaborative work and study. Some tensions among the faculty may go unresolved for long periods of time.

3 DEVELOPING

Teacher interactions indicate that there is a growing sense of trust, appreciation, and mutual respect for one another’s contributions to the school community. Several teachers have been trained to facilitate professional sharing among teachers, and a significant percentage of the teaching faculty meets every month to discuss student work and instructional strategies. The administrative team has taken steps to stay informed about current research, analyze student data, distribute best-practice literature to the faculty, and support the ongoing professional learning of every teacher. Time for collaborative preparation and planning is provided to teachers during the school day, but this time is often unstructured, loosely facilitated, or unproductive in terms of improving classroom instruction across the school.

5 PERFORMING

Faculty interactions are characterized by the kind of collegiality, trust, and respect that result from strong personal relationships, professionalism, and mutual appreciation. Teachers regularly observe one another’s practice and provide constructive feedback that is based on a shared understanding of effective teaching, learning goals, and student needs. The faculty has developed a “shared language” for discussing instruction, assessment, and other critical elements of teaching and learning. All teachers are involved in consistent, group-based professional conversations that are well established, organized, skillfully facilitated, and goal-driven. Group agendas and conversations focus on addressing the specific tasks and strategies of student-centered, inquiry-based teaching and assessment. Faculty meetings are characterized by enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and a sense of collective responsibility for improving student learning and outcomes, particularly among traditionally underperforming student subgroups.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

1 2 3 4 5
NOT ADDRESSED INITIATING DEVELOPING PERFORMING
### Step 2: Record Performance Strategies

#### Sample Strategies
- Create a professional development program that balances graduate courses, external workshops, conferences, and school visits with job-embedded professional learning, including mentoring, instructional coaching, classroom observation, data analysis, and professional learning groups.
- Create a centralized online repository of research, best-practice literature, rubrics, scoring guides, curriculum maps, and effective lesson plans that can facilitate sharing and ongoing professional learning.
- Develop a ‘shared language’ among the faculty for discussing instruction, assessment, and other essential elements of teaching and learning.
- Require all teachers to participate in a structured professional learning group that meets at least once a month for two hours or longer. Ensure that these sessions are well facilitated and follow a purposeful agenda focused on instructional improvement and student performance.
- Create time in the schedule for professional learning groups to meet regularly during the school day.

#### Our Strategies in this Dimension

### Step 3: Record Performance Evidence

#### Sample Evidence
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and team teaching are common, and teachers are knowledgeable about the learning expectations of their colleagues’ content areas and the instructional practices they use.
- The school has lower dropout rates, reduced absenteeism, and fewer behavioral issues.
- Teachers report a more positive view of their students’ abilities, more enthusiasm for teaching, more rewarding interactions with colleagues, and a stronger desire to continue learning and developing their own skills.
- Teachers are not only attending more conferences and other local or national learning opportunities, but they are also submitting proposals to lead presentations or facilitate workshops.

#### Our Evidence in this Dimension
### 2.1 VISION, MISSION + ACTION PLAN

#### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATING</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has a public vision and mission, but these statements have not been reviewed for many years and no longer reflect the needs of the current student body or the values and contributions of the current staff. The school’s improvement plan does not represent a collective commitment or reflect the expressed values of the school community. State and federal funds for school improvement and professional development often go underutilized or unused. Many major decisions appear to contradict the school’s mission statement, but faculty, students, and parents rarely discuss these inconsistencies. Teaching, assessment, and reporting practices are inconsistent across grade levels, departments, and classrooms.</td>
<td>The school has collaboratively developed a public vision and mission that reflects the contributions and values of diverse stakeholders in the school community, although some staff members and parents remain critical of the school’s new direction. Despite broad-based participation in its development, the action plan tends to reflect the personal interests and desires of a few strong voices. School leaders have discussed the action plan with all staff members and some community leaders. These communication efforts have increased support among parents, the public, and the local media. The principal has presented the school’s action plan to the school board and received general approval of its goals and strategies. Major decisions are increasingly aligned with the school’s vision, mission, and action plan, and instructional practices are being modified to reflect the school’s stated goals and values.</td>
<td>In collaboration with staff, students, parents, community members, and local policy makers, the school has created a bold, student-centered, long-term vision for ongoing school improvement and professional growth. The mission and vision statements express a unified value system that is based on personalizing teaching and learning, promoting common high expectations, cultivating student aspirations and ambitions, and nurturing the holistic development and wellness of every student. The language of the vision and mission is clear, understandable, and powerful, and it exemplifies the shared principles and ideals of the school community. These statements have been formally endorsed by the school board, local policy makers, and business and community leaders. The vision and mission are used to guide all budgetary, staffing, and instructional decisions, and to shape annual action plans. The action plan and all relevant documents are publicly available online, and school and community stakeholders are familiar with its major goals and strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Invite a broad representation of school and community stakeholders to collectively develop a vision and mission that are ambitious but feasible, and based on proven, research-based strategies.
- Have school leaders and teachers, in collaboration with a school coach or colleagues from other schools, meet for several days during the summer to revise the school’s action plan for the coming year based on an extensive review of quantitative and qualitative data from the previous year.
- Utilize online applications to track progress on action-plan objectives and to enhance transparency, accountability, and communication among staff members involved in implementing the action plan.
- Align supervision, evaluation, and hiring procedures with the school’s vision, mission, and school-improvement plan.
- Establish trusting relationships with local editors, journalists, and producers, and proactively communicate with the media when either difficult issues or success stories arise.

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- All students demonstrate consistently high achievement regardless of their gender, cultural background, socioeconomic status, or special needs.
- The community embraces the school’s mission, values, and action plan, as evidenced in surveys of parents and other stakeholders.
- Local media outlets regularly run stories on the school’s improvement work and profile student success stories.
- The school board, state representatives, and business and community leaders are informed about the school and publicly supportive of its goals.
STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING

Some efforts have been made by school leaders to energize the staff, but general morale and motivation remain low. Adult interactions occasionally lapse into complaints, gossip, and other negative commentary about students, colleagues, or the school itself. Teachers unevenly enforce rules about student behavior, and persistent classroom-management issues too often become the focus of teacher attention and disrupt learning for students. Students have few opportunities to participate in school governance, and parents and community members infrequently or unevenly participate in school programs and events. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities do not engage students from a variety of backgrounds, and exclusionary cliques are common across the student body. Staff, students, and parents occasionally report incidences of bullying and derogatory language by students.

3 DEVELOPING

The school has formal procedures that allow students, staff, and parents to voice concerns directly to the administrative and leadership teams. Innovation and risk-taking by teachers are accepted, although it is seldom encouraged or expected by school leaders. Improved collegial relationships are having a noticeable impact on staff motivation and morale. Administrators and teachers have developed a communication plan that is helping to keep parents and community members informed about the school and engaged in its activities. Student behavioral issues tend to be minor, and there is little evidence of bullying or harassment by students. Students from diverse backgrounds participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, but the same handful of students tend to assume leadership roles.

5 PERFORMING

The school’s commitment to equity is not just proclaimed in its mission statement, but is evident in every program, course, and interaction. Adults in the school do not make unconstructive critical statements about students, colleagues, or the school itself. School leaders and faculty encourage innovation, risk-taking, and professionalism in the classroom, and effective teaching is recognized and rewarded. The school community has collaboratively created and endorsed a system of shared beliefs, traditions, and practices that celebrate positive values and encourage a safe and inclusive school environment. The entire faculty feels individually and collectively responsible for the academic success, personal growth, and well-being of every student. Students feel a sense of pride in their school and ownership over their learning. Students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds are active in school governance and serve as leaders in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Administrators and faculty actively attempt to resolve any tensions or problems that may arise. Co-curricular programs and course-embedded lessons address diversity awareness and the importance of cultural sensitivity, and students are encouraged to explore and question their own beliefs about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. School leaders and staff do not tolerate hurtful language, prejudicial behavior, or the perpetuation of false stereotypes about other people and cultures. Student successes both in and outside of the classroom are publicly celebrated.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td></td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STEP 2 » RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES**

**SAMPLE STRATEGIES**

- Ensure that all teachers intentionally model positive behaviors and actively promote positive student self-images of academic ability, future aspirations, and personal potential in the classroom.
- Hold open community forums in which school leaders candidly discuss school matters, and in which participants—students, parents, community members—are encouraged to speak up and raise concerns.
- Use agendas, protocols, norms, and other strategies to ensure that staff meetings are well organized, efficiently run, and focused on improving instructional quality, collegial relationships, and the student experience—not just administrative issues.
- Make special efforts to reach out to and involve historically disengaged parents in school activities.
- Encourage students to assume leadership roles and help promote a positive school culture.

**OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION**

**STEP 3 » RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE**

**SAMPLE EVIDENCE**

- Teachers, students, and parents are informed about school plans and activities, and student and parent participation in school decisions and activities is increasing.
- Extreme competitive behavior among students is not evident in the classroom, in communal spaces, or on the athletic field.
- More students are arriving early and staying late to meet with teachers and take advantage of learning opportunities.
- Discipline referrals have decreased and attendance rates are above 95%. Major student problems—such as depression, drug abuse, and suicide—are extremely rare.

**OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION**
### 2.3 MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

#### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>2 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>3 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The curriculum is a series of classroom-based courses culminating in a high school diploma, and students infrequently engage in learning experiences outside the classroom. Interdisciplinary collaboration is rare, and teachers infrequently use strategies to make content more relevant or to connect students with local issues, leaders, organizations, and opportunities. Student choice is primarily limited to course selection, and most courses do not integrate personalization strategies that address different learning styles and needs. The school has not taken steps to develop partnerships with local businesses or collegiate institutions, and it does not have established internship or dual enrollment programs. Technical education is entirely separate from the academic program. Students are given few opportunities to earn academic credit outside of classroom-based courses.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multiple course options are available, although course content and sequences are largely predetermined and learning expectations are applied unevenly. Most courses are still taught in traditional classrooms, but teachers are gradually redefining their conceptions of what an effective learning environment can or should be. Online credit-recovery provides students who have failed one or more courses with alternative learning options that allow them to catch up to their peers and graduate on time. The school is responsive when students propose alternative pathways to meeting graduation requirements, but the faculty has not developed a system to encourage innovative, student-designed projects. Teachers in the academic program are beginning to collaborate with educators from the local technical program, and several integrated courses expose students to rigorous academic content while giving them the opportunity to develop applied skills. Partnerships with local business and collegiate institutions have led to the development of new internship and dual enrollment programs, but only a small number of students are taking advantage of these opportunities.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The school and faculty have adopted a general pedagogical philosophy that teaching strategies, learning environments, and time can be variable, but learning standards will remain constant. The school provides a variety of learning pathways to every student—including classroom-embedded, co-curricular, and outside-of-school pathways—that accommodate different learning styles while applying the same universally high academic expectations. Students are encouraged to take an active role in planning their own education, and opportunities to propose and co-design additional projects or courses of study are provided. Access to and participation in alternative learning options is consistent across all student subgroups, and all pathways prepare students for success in college and globally competitive modern careers. The school’s career and technical education program is integrated into and aligned with the school’s academic program, and students are encouraged to select courses from both programs. Vibrant internship and dual enrollment programs enroll a significant percentage of the student body.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

- [ ] 1 NOT ADDRESSED
- [ ] 2 INITIATING
- [ ] 3 DEVELOPING
- [ ] 4 PERFORMING
- [ ] 5
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Develop strategic partnerships that provide the kind of intellectually rigorous courses and programs that prepare students for college and technology-driven, 21st century workplaces (e.g., career and technical centers, community-based education programs, institutions of higher education, etc.).
- Forge partnerships with local or state colleges and universities to develop dual-enrollment programs for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students.
- Create curriculum-integrated, career-based programs—such as apprenticeships, internships, or job-shadowing—that enhance student understanding of career paths and strengthen school, community, and local business connections.
- Develop new graduation policies that provide more flexibility in meeting learning standards (e.g., a policy that requires students to complete a service-learning project before graduation).
- Monitor and track student engagement and dropout rates, and interview dropouts to determine the primary reasons why they left school.
- Develop alternative programs and adult-education pathways for dropouts to earn a high school diploma.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION

- Attendance, graduation, college-enrollment, and internship-participation rates have increased dramatically, and dropout rates are low and decreasing.
- A broad variety of students—including higher- and lower-performing students, male and female students, and students from higher- and lower-income households—take advantage of the school’s career and technical programs.
- A significant number of students are graduating with transferable college credits and postsecondary certifications.
- Follow-up surveys indicate that dropouts have returned to school or completed an adult-education program.
## Global Best Practices

### 2.4 Transitions

**Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers have little information about the learning needs of incoming students, and the school has not developed a strategy for keeping parents informed about and involved in their children’s education. Teachers rarely communicate student-learning needs across grade levels, and academic course progressions are not always articulated or aligned from one grade to the next. The school does not receive student data from its sending schools. Although individual teachers take a personal interest in their students’ development, there is no systemic strategy for helping teachers identify student needs as they transition into high school or progress from grade to grade. The school has little information on student outcomes following graduation, such as data on college enrollment, remediation, and persistence rates.</td>
<td>Better communication with sending and receiving schools is beginning to occur, but these strategies tend to focus on administrative or logistical issues, not data exchange or student needs. The curriculum in most courses is aligned with collegiate expectations, although some students continue to be enrolled in courses that do not result in true college-ready preparation. The school has created an advisory structure that pairs every incoming student with at least one adult in the school, but the purpose of the program has not been clearly articulated and some advisories tend to be disorganized or unfocused. The school offers a variety of extended learning options, internships, and college-preparation programs to juniors and seniors, but these opportunities are largely being utilized by historically high-performing students from more advantaged households. The school tracks information on graduates, but rarely analyzes it to improve programs and support strategies for current students.</td>
<td>School leaders and teachers have established strong connections between sending and receiving schools that focus on both programmatic alignment and student-needs issues. Teachers at different grade levels routinely discuss individual student learning needs—particularly for academically struggling students from disadvantaged backgrounds—and school structures ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult in the school. Courses and curricula have been articulated across grade levels, and with sending middle schools and postsecondary expectations, to mitigate content gaps and ensure a seamless continuum of learning. Teachers are knowledgeable about all content-area expectations and grade-level standards, particularly the specific standards for students transitioning into and out of their grade level. The school gathers and analyzes postsecondary data on their graduates and uses that information to improve postsecondary-planning programs and support systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 4 >> Score Your School**

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

1: Not Addressed  | 2: Initiating  | 3: Developing  | 4: Performing
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Implement teaming (students paired with a consistent group of teachers) during the ninth and tenth grades to increase personalization and enhance teacher understanding of individual learning needs.
- Align all learning expectations, curriculum, and instruction with the school’s primary sending middle schools so that entering ninth-grade students are equipped with the skills needed to succeed.
- Create a well-coordinated dual-enrollment program that allows students to take college courses for both high school and college credit, and that provides on-campus learning experiences and exposure to collegiate life.
- Beginning in the ninth grade, offer a comprehensive college- and career-planning program to all students and parents that is focused on practical guidance, including selecting a degree program, filling out applications, applying for financial aid, budgeting for college expenses, writing a resume, and interviewing well.
- Adopt a graduation policy that requires students to apply to at least one postsecondary-degree program and to complete the Common Application for Undergraduate Admissions and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- Course failures, absences, behavioral issues, and dropout rates are low or decreasing among ninth- and tenth-grade students.
- College enrollment and persistence rates—particularly among first-generation, minority, and immigrant families—are rising significantly each year.
- A significant percentage of juniors and seniors are participating in summer learning programs, internships, peer tutoring, dual-enrollment courses, volunteerism, political campaigns, social-change activism, and other experiences that develop leadership skills, maturity, active citizenship, and preparation for postsecondary learning and adult life.
- The number of students taking standardized college-entrance exams, such as the SAT, ACT, and Accuplacer is increasing, particularly among student subgroups that have not historically aspired to a collegiate education.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
### 2.5 Interventions + Support

#### Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interventions and support strategies are only offered occasionally outside of regular courses and school hours. When available, academic support is not integrated with regular courses and primarily consists of repeating material at a slower pace using the same general instructional strategies employed in regular classes. Special education is a separate academic track, and students enrolled in this program not only spend a great deal of time isolated from their peers, but they experience social stigma related to the label. Detailed data on absenteeism, behavioral incidences, and course failures are not consistently tracked or regularly analyzed to identify potential at-risk or underperforming students who may be in danger of failing or dropping out. School disciplinary policies lead to suspensions and other measures, compounding learning deficits for many students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intervention and support strategies are available to all students, but they are rarely evaluated for effectiveness or modified from year to year in response to fluctuations in student performance or needs. Academic support is viewed as an “add on,” not as an essential component of effective teaching and learning that should be integrated into courses to accelerate learning for all students. Academic-support personnel receive little professional development, rarely coordinate with classroom teachers, and often employ the same instructional strategies that proved ineffective in regular courses. The school is taking steps to develop a comprehensive intervention system, but support strategies are not systemic, remain insufficiently challenging, and are provided too late in the school year to have a meaningful influence on performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All teachers in the school take professional responsibility for student outcomes, including course failures and low aspirations, and the school’s accountability and support systems ensure that all students receive the personalized interventions and instructional time they need to achieve high learning standards. Teachers across content areas regularly discuss the learning needs of their shared students, while co-developing personalized support strategies for struggling and at-risk students. Academic support is focused on acceleration, not traditional remediation, and strategies are regularly evaluated to determine if student outcomes are improving. All students—both high-performing and low-performing—are engaged in some form of individualized academic acceleration, which has reduced the negative self-images and stigma typically associated with support options. Incoming ninth-graders are pre-assessed to determine learning needs, and interventions are provided at the first indication that a student is falling behind.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Step 4 >> Score Your School

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

- NOT ADDRESSED
- INITIATING
- DEVELOPING
- PERFORMING

2.5

[Diagram of scale with 1-5 ratings and descriptions]
## Sample Strategies

- Use “early warning” strategies such as formative assessment, student-led conferences, and advisories to help identify academically struggling and at-risk students before they fall too far behind or drop out.
- Develop a comprehensive intervention system that utilizes a variety of integrated, mutually reinforcing support strategies, including after-school programs, summer school, co-teaching, peer tutoring, companion and bridge classes, and course-embedded supplemental instruction.
- Ensure that academic-support and extended-learning options are highly inclusive, offered to all students, integrated into all courses, and available to both low-performing and high-performing students, including independent studies and honors challenges.
- Provide all teachers with professional development focused on classroom-embedded support, personalized learning, and academic acceleration.
- Have skilled support staff—literacy coaches, special education teachers, guidance counselors, technology specialists—work closely with teachers to coordinate and enhance the quality of student interventions.
- Provide regularly scheduled planning time for the classroom teachers and interventionists supporting common students.

## Sample Evidence

- Academic support is no longer stigmatized within the school community, but is viewed as a positive, essential component of the learning experience.
- Nearly all students are performing at or above grade level by the end of tenth grade.
- Graduation and college-going rates have increased significantly among traditionally underperforming subgroups.

## Our Evidence in This Dimension
## 2.6 TIME + SPACE

### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructional strategies employed by teachers are often hampered by time constraints and generally emphasize content coverage rather than depth of student learning. The school calendar, daily schedule, and other important information are not consistently updated or publicly available online for students and parents. School facilities are generally closed to the public on evenings, weekends, and during the summer, and few community organizations use the school for meetings, events, or programs. Outside of lockers, students are not given personal space, such as reading nooks or workstations. The majority of seniors attend school for only a few hours each day, and many of these students do not use this extra time to increase their readiness for college, work, or adult life.</td>
<td>Teachers have discussed how learning spaces and time can be used more efficiently or effectively, and the majority of teachers are making efforts to incorporate proven practices that make better use of instructional time. The school, however, has not adopted formal policies to support these innovations. School facilities are being used more frequently for community activities and extended learning programs, but these opportunities are rarely integrated with the school’s academic program and student participation is sporadic. Extended school hours, a year-round calendar, and other flexible scheduling approaches are starting to be employed.</td>
<td>All teachers ensure that lessons and pedagogy are being refined to make efficient and effective use of instructional time. Learning time is varied, enabling students to master skills and gain knowledge based on their unique learning needs rather than an inflexible common schedule. The school has redesigned its facilities and space to ensure that they are conducive to learning, and administrators have identified and prioritized needed improvements and upgrades. The school has made concerted efforts to become a learning center for the community, and school facilities are frequently utilized after normal school hours and on weekends throughout the year. The weekly school schedule includes time for professional sharing, collaborative lesson planning, and professional development for all teachers. School leaders have investigated developmentally appropriate class-scheduling strategies, longer blocks of time, extended school days, off-campus learning, and other flexible scheduling strategies that can empower teachers and students to work and learn more creatively. The school has taken steps to create flexible, multipurpose learning spaces that can be used in a variety of innovative and non-traditional ways by both students and teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in this dimension.

```
1 2 3 4 5
NOT ADDRESSED INITIATING DEVELOPING PERFORMING
```
### Sample Strategies

- Conduct a “time audit” to identify trends and patterns in how instructional time is being used in every course.
- Restructure teacher schedules and workloads to increase the amount of time teachers devote to collaborative planning, preparing lessons, curriculum design, evaluating student work, professional learning groups, data analysis, instructional refinement, professional development, meeting with students and parents, and other responsibilities related to improving pedagogical effectiveness (in some high-performing countries, for example, teachers often spend less than 50% of their work time in the classroom).
- Publish a master schedule online so every member of the community can access information about all school and community events for the year.
- Involve students in planning the use of existing school facilities and any proposed expansions, including projects to develop environmentally sustainable practices and test the facility for environmental contamination.
- Prioritize all structural improvements, equipment purchases, and staffing decisions to ensure that student-learning needs are met first.

### Our Strategies in This Dimension

### Sample Evidence

- More students and teachers are arriving at school early or staying late to take advantage of school resources and learning opportunities.
- Parent involvement in school activities, fundraisers, and volunteer opportunities has increased, particularly among low-income, first-generation, and immigrant families.
- Community members and business leaders regularly provide expertise, services, and personal time to the school.
- The school facility is increasingly used during evenings and weekends to host adult education programs, community celebrations, and public forums.

### Our Evidence in This Dimension
STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING

Annual student data are made available to school leaders and teachers, but it is often too late in the year to guide action plans, curriculum modifications, or professional development. The school uses a largely paper-based system for tracking and analyzing student data, and information is stored in different files and locations, making it difficult to access and organize. Frequent errors are uncovered in school and student data—even in state and federal reporting—and responsibilities for collecting and reporting data are not clearly defined. Teachers are unskilled in using data to identify student learning needs, and instruction is often predetermined and standardized even in courses that include a mix of student learning styles, performance histories, grade levels, or cultural backgrounds.

3 DEVELOPING

The school has developed a defined process for collecting, archiving, tracking, and analyzing student data that uses computers, databases, and other relevant digital applications for storing, retrieving, and analyzing data. Although the school has converted to a centralized data system, historical data remain disorganized and have not yet been entered into the new system. Data is regularly shared with the staff, but it is often confusing or misunderstood and only occasionally leads to changes in organizational design or instructional practice. School leaders have recruited skilled staff members and teachers to ensure the integrity, reliability, and utility of the school’s data system. All teachers use data systems for grading and reporting, but many teachers are not yet using data diagnostically to improve instruction and personalize learning for students.

5 PERFORMING

Current and historical student data are an integral part of the school’s decision-making process and academic program. The faculty is trained in how to use data to guide program improvements and help personalize instruction for all students. The school has a data-collection system in place that allows the faculty to look beyond test results and general percentages to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses, as well as patterns of performance across courses, content areas, grade levels, student subgroups, and individual students. The school has clearly defined performance objectives, and student data are tracked and reviewed to determine progress made toward achieving long-term goals. Professional learning groups regularly use disaggregated student data to guide their own professional growth, and teachers regularly make data-informed instructional modifications intended to address the identified needs of their students. Parents have online access to essential information and updates about their child’s education. A thoughtful communication strategy utilizes online technologies to keep parents, local policy makers, and the public apprised of school-performance data and ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.
## Sample Strategies

- Make use of a common student-information system and other technological tools to track, disaggregate, and analyze student data. Include data required for state and federal reporting, but also data that can help identify priority areas for instructional improvement, such as course failures, intervention outcomes, and postsecondary success data.
- Provide parents with online access to up-to-the-minute information on the academic status of their children, including information about current and upcoming assignments.
- Use the National Student Clearinghouse’s StudentTracker for High Schools system to track the college-enrollment and -persistence rates of all graduates.
- Undertake a comprehensive data review at the end of each year to identify specific strengths and weaknesses that can shape the coming year’s action plan.
- Conduct confidential surveys of students, parents, and teachers to collect data on school culture, teacher effectiveness, and other important issues.
- Utilize professional learning groups and other school-embedded professional development structures to ensure that teachers understand the importance of analyzing data, and have time to disaggregate student data, discuss their findings with colleagues, and determine research-based solutions to improve classroom practice.

## Our Strategies in This Dimension

## Sample Evidence

- Regular upgrades in data technology and ongoing refinement of the data-collection process are increasing efficiency and minimizing errors.
- Surveys of the faculty indicate that data is used to guide both programmatic and instructional decisions.
- Historically disengaged parents are more informed about their children’s academic progress and are taking a more active role in their children’s education.
- Discussions about student data at the faculty and community levels are aligned with the school mission and action plan, and are focused on addressing identified student needs.

## Our Evidence in This Dimension
## 2.8 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>INITIATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision and accountability procedures are largely top-down and teachers view efforts to evaluate their practice primarily in terms of job security, not professional improvement. Professional development opportunities are randomly selected, sporadically offered, and unconnected to a coherent plan for ongoing, school-wide improvement. Very little common-planning or preparation time is built into the school schedule for teachers, and faculty members rarely collaborate on curriculum design and interdisciplinary lessons. The school offers late-start and early release days, but many teachers use these opportunities to catch up on personal work or deal with short-term logistical issues. Funding streams are generally disconnected and available resources are not used to support a strategic, long-term school-improvement plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has an action plan that is reviewed and revised annually, but it is somewhat confusing, cumbersome, and overly ambitious. The faculty has developed academic-improvement goals, but these goals are general and not specific to content areas or student subgroups. Teachers are energized to improve instruction and learning opportunities for students, although new ideas and initiatives are often introduced haphazardly, resulting in some inefficiencies, confusion, and burdensome workloads. Teachers are beginning to see themselves as knowledge workers, and a culture of professional inquiry, self-reflection, and evidence-based teaching is emerging. Some teachers are participating in self-designed study groups, but the school has not yet offered the training and support necessary to institutionalize professional learning groups across the school. Teachers regularly participate in conferences and seminars, yet school leaders have not developed a coherent professional-development plan that is based on academic goals and identified student-learning needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school’s action plan is ambitious, but achievable, and focused on a relatively limited number of targeted, high-priority goals each year. School-wide academic-improvement goals are based on identified programmatic or instructional weaknesses, and specific goals have been set for content areas and student subgroups. The action plan is driven by multiple measures—not just standardized assessment results—including student-level data and community demographics. School goals are clearly and regularly communicated to the school community. Progress toward achieving action-plan objectives is monitored throughout the school year, and transparency, collaboration, and consistent communication ensure accountability to the vision and objectives of the action plan. Disaggregated student data and assessment results are used to inform strategic planning and professional development, and the impact of professional learning is continually monitored using teacher surveys, assessment trends, and other data. Teachers view themselves not as employees or passive recipients of professional development, but as a community of leaders, knowledge producers, and student mentors. The school budget, grant funding, and other resources support the priorities and actions outlined in the school’s improvement plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Strategies

- Provide teachers with time for classroom observation, common planning, and other collaborative strategies intended to improving instructional quality.
- Ensure that professional development addresses the characteristics of effective instructional improvement identified by research: (1) create awareness of weaknesses in individual practice; (2) provide precise knowledge of best practice; and (3) motivate teachers to improve.
- Foster a pedagogical culture of research and inquiry in which teachers regularly review, discuss, and act upon the latest educational, instructional, developmental, and cognitive research.
- Examine collective bargaining agreements and look for ways to offer incentives (e.g., public recognition, sabbaticals, subsidized graduate study, professional advancement, etc.) to encourage teachers to improve classroom practice.
- Appoint expert mentor teachers trained in facilitation skills, coaching techniques, and instructional modeling to help new or struggling teachers.
- Contract a long-term school coach—i.e., a skilled facilitator and school-improvement strategist who develops trusting relationships and a strong understanding of the school and its needs—to help guide the school-improvement work.

### Our Strategies in This Dimension

### Sample Evidence

- Ten percent of teacher work time (or more than a hundred hours a year) is devoted to professional development, including professional learning groups, instructional coaching, and other forms of school-embedded learning.
- At least ten percent of district or school budgets are devoted to providing professional development designed to improve instructional quality.
- Teacher surveys indicate that improvement strategies are regularly discussed with colleagues, mentor teachers, and school coaches, and a culture of cooperation, collegial, and professionalism is evident among the staff.
- Classroom observations are used to improve practice and not simply for annual performance evaluations.
### 3.1 TEACHER RECRUITMENT + RETENTION

**STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators select new teaching hires with little input from staff members, students, parents, and other stakeholders in the community. Teacher performance is not considered in the annual evaluation process, and disparities in student outcomes across courses are not investigated, discussed, or understood. New teachers receive little formal professional support, and the official guidance they receive is primarily focused on procedural issues, not instructional improvement. The school has a difficult time retaining experienced or motivated faculty, which has resulted in high turnover rates and persistent inconsistencies in programs and standards. Nearly all teacher time is spent in the classroom, and interdisciplinary collaboration is rare. The school does not have a formal professional-development program, and when professional-development opportunities are provided they are not aligned with the school’s vision, mission, action plan, or identified staff needs.</td>
<td>Teachers contribute to the hiring process, including participation on interview committees, although the school tends to hire the most qualified candidates without sufficiently considering whether their background, personality, motivation level, and other factors are a good fit for the school community or its student needs. The school’s induction process creates a welcoming environment for new hires by pairing new, less-experienced faculty with a veteran mentor teacher who provides regular guidance throughout the first year. After the initial induction period, structured opportunities for ongoing instructional coaching, professional learning, collaboration, and career growth taper off significantly.</td>
<td>The school has a rigorous, multi-stage teacher-selection process that has been collaboratively developed with input from staff, students, and representative stakeholders within the school community. Every prospective teacher is evaluated against a clear, concise teacher profile that is aligned with the school mission and that outlines expectations for content knowledge, pedagogical skill, professional conduct, ongoing learning, and other essential attributes of highly effective teaching. Background, personality, motivation level, and other critical job-performance factors are considered during the hiring process to help ensure that new teachers are not only qualified, but a good fit for the school community and its needs. Beginning teachers are paired with an experienced mentor teacher who provides regular support, guidance, and in-class instructional modeling during the first two to three years of practice. Supervision and evaluation procedures are differentiated to accommodate the strengths and needs of teachers at different stages of their careers. Thoughtful professional-advancement and performance-recognition procedures motivate teachers to increase their professional expertise, pursue advanced degrees, assume leadership roles, and make valuable contributions to the school community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Recruit new teachers and administrators who graduated in the top 10%-25% of their class, and offer competitive entry-level salaries and other incentives to top candidates.
- Develop rigorous criteria and a multistage selection process for new hires that involves diverse representation from across the school community.
- Look for faculty candidates that embody the qualities of effective teachers as identified by international research: (1) strong literacy and numeracy skills, (2) strong communication and interpersonal skills, (3) a willingness to learn and grow as a professional, and (4) a strong desire and motivation to teach.
- Examine traditional collective bargaining agreements and salary scales and look for ways to restructure these processes to encourage teacher leadership, increase scholarly activities, and focus professional growth on improved student learning.
- Create at least a three-year probationary vetting period for new hires—during which their teaching skills are observed and teaching assignments are different than those of veteran teachers—before offering a permanent position.
- Provide new teachers with ongoing mentoring, practical-skill coaching, guided practice, and extra professional development during their first three to five years of teaching, and select mentor teachers and instructional specialists based on their proven record of effective teaching and coaching.

OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- The faculty is composed of teachers from a broad range of backgrounds that bring varied professional skills, talents, and experiences to the classroom.
- Active engagement in professional learning has increased conference attendance, the pursuit of more advanced degrees, and other indicators of improved professional motivation among the faculty.
- Faculty turnover is low or decreasing.
- Faculty surveys reflect high or increasing levels of job satisfaction.

OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION

- The faculty is composed of teachers from a broad range of backgrounds that bring varied professional skills, talents, and experiences to the classroom.
- Active engagement in professional learning has increased conference attendance, the pursuit of more advanced degrees, and other indicators of improved professional motivation among the faculty.
- Faculty turnover is low or decreasing.
- Faculty surveys reflect high or increasing levels of job satisfaction.
STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING
School administrators are primarily focused on budgetary, building, and behavioral management, and relatively little of their time is devoted to instructional leadership. Major decisions are made by the superintendent or principal with little input from staff or students, and these decisions often seem random or unconsidered to many members of the school community. The principal has not clearly articulated his or her vision for the school or its academic program, and many administrative decisions are not aligned with the school’s stated learning goals, action plan, or identified student needs. The principal is largely uninformed about the instructional practices being used throughout the school, and has not made professional development a school or budgetary priority.

3 DEVELOPING
The principal’s vision for the school has energized some faculty members and stakeholders, but a few outspoken faculty, student, and parent voices remain opposed to the new direction. Despite good intentions, building-management and budgetary issues continue to absorb a significant amount of the principal’s time, which has diminished his or her ability to take a stronger leadership role in improving instructional quality throughout the school. The principal and other administrators regularly praise and encourage the teaching staff, but they display little actual knowledge about or understanding of the teaching and learning taking place throughout the school on a daily basis. The principal recognizes that a good leader empowers others to assume leadership roles and work more effectively, and he or she has made a public commitment to promoting more shared-leadership opportunities in the school. During the summer, school leaders meet with faculty to review and refine the school’s action plan, but administrators often fail to assess progress throughout the year and hold staff members accountable when responsibilities and tasks are not completed. The school has created a leadership team that includes diverse representation from across the school community, but the leadership team is not consulted when some major decisions related to the school mission, action plan, and academic program are being made.

5 PERFORMING
The principal is a skilled instructional leader who understands teaching, regularly observes classrooms, and spends the majority of his or her time trying to understand the needs of the student body and develop a student-centered academic program that can meet those needs. The principal has articulated a bold, clear, and compelling vision for the school that is supported by a majority of the faculty, students, and parents. The principal and administrative team are committed to providing high-quality professional development to all teachers, and efforts are made to cultivate leadership skills, increase professional knowledge, and use feedback from teachers and students to improve practices and leadership strategies. Administrators make teaching assignments based on identified student needs and specific academic goals, not on tradition or personal preference. Performance data are used to make a compelling case for redesigning school structures and modifying practices in ways that will address student needs more effectively. A commitment to transparency and robust communications keeps all stakeholders apprised of efforts being made to realize the school’s vision and mission. The principal recognizes that the school is a public, democratic institution, and that faculty, parents, and other stakeholders need to be involved in major governance decisions. The principal not only honors all voices and listens to concerns, but he or she acts responsibly and proactively to address issues before they become a major problem.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL
Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

[ ] 1 NOT ADDRESSED 2 INITIATING 3 DEVELOPING 4 5 PERFORMING
### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Involve faculty and community stakeholders in hiring a principal with a strong classroom-teaching background and deep understanding of how to lead systemic school-improvement process.
- Devote at least 50% of the principal’s time to school and instructional improvement (i.e., leading curriculum discussions, providing formative and summative feedback to teachers on instruction, participating alongside teachers in instructionally focused professional development, examining student data with teachers, etc.).
- Leverage formal leadership roles to foster a student-focused culture in which student needs—both individual and collective—take priority over other concerns.
- Require the principal to participate regularly in professional learning groups with faculty and with principals from other schools to discuss common issues and effective leadership strategies.
- Conduct annual whole-school reviews, using multiple measures and data sets, to determine what resources and support teachers need to improve student performance and outcomes.
- Develop communication processes that ensure the principal regularly and openly discusses the school’s work with the staff, community, school board, superintendent, state legislators, and other community leaders.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- The school community—especially the superintendent, school board, and faculty—have developed a rigorous selection process for new principals to ensure that the qualifications, skills, and personalities of candidates fit the school’s vision, mission, and values.
- The principal and other school leaders regularly visit classrooms, meet with individual teachers and students, and attend school and community functions.
- The principal knows the names of students and staff, and is deeply knowledgeable about the school.
- Teachers and students regularly bring their concerns to the principal and/or leadership team.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
3.3 SHARED LEADERSHIP

STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING

The school’s governance structure and decision-making process have not been clearly articulated or publicly shared, and participation in major school decisions remains closed to most stakeholders. Most decisions are top-down and made with little input from the staff despite some attempts to broaden participation in governance. The school has not institutionalized processes that encourage and support aspiring teacher-leaders, and school-supported professional development does not explicitly address leadership-building skills. School priorities have not been clearly articulated or communicated, which has created confusion about staff responsibilities and led to a general reticence about taking risks or trying new approaches.

3 DEVELOPING

The school has developed a shared governance structure, but roles, operational specifics, and accountability procedures remain somewhat vague and undefined. Teachers and other staff members have a greater understanding of the rationale for and intention of decisions made by the principal, and efforts to improve communication and transparency are fostering greater trust and confidence in the administrative team. Leadership roles are routinely offered to the staff, but decision-making authority is limited and leadership responsibilities fall within narrowly defined parameters. Teachers do not feel entirely comfortable questioning administrative decisions, suggesting alternative approaches, or incorporating new strategies into their classroom practice. The principal operates under the belief that he or she needs to be involved in every school decision, which creates a “bottleneck” when it comes to implementing and advancing new initiatives.

5 PERFORMING

The school has created a leadership committee made up of a representative selection of stakeholders (administrators, teachers, students, parents) from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and special-needs backgrounds. A consistent leadership team—made up of skilled, knowledgeable, and motivated faculty—plays a major role in leading school-improvement efforts, shaping the school’s strategic plan and academic goals, advocating for the concerns of staff and students, and improving communication and understanding between the administration (school board, superintendent, school administrators) and all stakeholders in the school community. All teachers are held to high expectations, but they are also given the decision-making autonomy they need to address and remain responsive to student needs. The school culture is collaborative, respectful, and collegial, and the staff members take pride in conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner during interactions with students, parents, and the public. The faculty is involved in critical instructional decisions, including the selection of instructional resources, the design of professional development, and the creation of the school’s action plan. Administrators and other school leaders listen to and honor all voices in the school community, especially voices that have traditionally been marginalized or underrepresented.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES**

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Create a system of communication, transparency, and accountability that ensures fidelity to the school’s vision, mission, and action plan.
- Examine supervision-and-evaluation procedures and other school-wide decision-making processes for ways to encourage greater shared leadership.
- Create ad-hoc working groups, coordinated by a consistent school leadership team, to address specific issues or achieve specific goals.
- Create a process for administrators to regularly meet with individual staff members to discuss job satisfaction, career aspirations, and personal and professional growth.
- Develop a career pathway, which includes professional support and graduate courses, for motivated teachers to assume greater leadership responsibility over time and eventually attain administrative certification.
- Host public forums in which administrators and other school leaders inform the school community about major decisions and strategic plans, and ensure that meeting minutes and other information are distributed in a timely fashion and made available online.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

**STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE**

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- Parent participation in school activities has increased, particularly among traditionally underrepresented families.
- Student participation in school governance, co-curricular activities, community volunteerism, activism, political campaigns, voting, and local, state, and national student-leadership opportunities has increased.
- Surveys of teachers, students, and parents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with school leadership and support for major school decisions.
- Parents, community members, and local business leaders and policy makers are informed about the school and its programs, and the local news media regularly profiles positive stories of student success and teacher leadership.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION
### 3.4 MORAL COURAGE

**STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 INITIATING</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**1 INITIATING**

The school culture is largely characterized by complacency and a “don’t rock the boat” mentality, and many important decisions are made in the effort to sidestep potential resistance or pushback from staff and parents. There are no formal structures or processes in place to examine student data at the classroom or team level, largely due to a desire to avoid singling out a specific teacher, group, or department. The principal and other school leaders routinely avoid confrontation or discussions about persistent issues, and poor student-performance results are not openly or honestly discussed with individual teachers. Poor scores on state assessments and other unflattering data may be hidden, excused, or minimized. Inappropriate and unprofessional behavior is often tolerated, which has eroded trust and collegiality among the staff. The school culture remains largely resistant to self-reflection, and the belief that “we’re doing good enough” persists despite evidence that too many students are failing to succeed or graduate.

**3 DEVELOPING**

The superintendent, principal, and leadership team have developed a strategic plan for confronting challenges that may arise in response to school-improvement efforts. Decisions are increasingly guided by identified student needs, research on school effectiveness, and sound principles—not by a fear of confrontation, resistance, or possible failure. The school community is no longer making excuses for poor student scores or other unfavorable data, but is taking steps to identify the root causes and undertake strategic actions to address the issues. Administrators, teachers, and other staff have collaboratively developed standards and norms for professional behavior and interactions, although unprofessional behavior by some individuals continues to go unacknowledged by administrators and colleagues. The school's action plan is bold and ambitious, but the principal and leadership team have been unwilling to advocate for key elements with the superintendent and school board, even though the strategies are in the best interest of their students.

**5 PERFORMING**

The principal, administrators, and teacher-leaders skillfully handle contentious issues and defend equitable ideals and practices—even in the face of actual or potential attacks—that promote positive learning outcomes for all students. Good intentions and well-laid plans are not undone by careless words or actions, but they are achieved through collaboration, professionalism, and goal-driven moral courage. Each faculty member assumes personal responsibility for addressing interpersonal issues before they turn into problems. School leaders are self-reflective, process concerns and conflicts openly, and move the collective dialogue beyond personal issues and interests. School faculty and staff advocate for the school’s improvement work within the community, and the principal and leadership team work closely with the superintendent and school board to advance critical policies that support a student-centered academic program. When difficult situations arise, the principal proactively communicates with staff, students, parents, and the larger community to minimize the spread of misinformation, including reaching out to school board and local media. In general, challenges are not avoided or postponed, but embraced by administrators, faculty, and staff.

**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Strategies

- Openly review the school mission statement with staff, parents, and the community, and compare existing practices and organizational structures with the mission statement to ensure that programs are in alignment with its expressed principles.
- Adopt an “open door” policy so that any staff member, student, or parent with a significant concern about the school can meet with the principal and leadership team.
- Announce the school’s commitment to equitable practices and outcomes for all students, and have the principal publicly outline a clear plan for achieving these goals.
- Establish a set of school-wide norms that encourage open conversation within and outside of the school regarding student performance results and other data.
- Adopt a set of shared expectations and norms—aligned with the school’s vision and mission—for staff meetings, professional conduct, and adult-student relationships.
- Allow time in faculty meetings for staff members to raise concerns and question decisions in a constructive, respectful, and supportive manner.

### Sample Evidence

- Criticism and differing opinions are expressed constructively and respectfully among staff and within the school community generally.
- Student interactions reflect the positive behaviors, attitudes, and social skills modeled by teachers and other staff members.
- Administrators and teachers regularly ask students and colleagues for feedback on their leadership and pedagogy.
- School leaders regularly discuss the school’s efforts with the district leadership and, when necessary, advocate for changes to district or state policies to create an environment that is more supportive of the school action plan.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This tool would not have been possible without the thoughtful contributions of many individuals, particularly those of the New England Secondary School Consortium Working Group—a diverse collection of state and educational leaders working across state lines to coordinate and advance the Consortium’s strategies and activities.

CONNECTICUT
Karen Addesso, Barbara Beaudin, Patricia Ciccone, Sarah Ellsworth, Harriet Feldlauffer, Robert Lucco, Marion Martinez, Charlene Russell-Tucker

MAINE
Lora Downing, Dan Hupp, Barbara Moody, Wanda Monthey

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Lisa Danley, Mariane Gfroerer, Paul Leather, Marcia McCaffrey, Susan Randall, Roberta Tenney

RHODE ISLAND
Rosemary Burns, Vanessa Cooley, Marcia Cross, Sharon Lee, Roy Seitsinger

VERMONT
Carol Duley, John Fischer, Rae Ann Knopf, Tina Muncy

GREAT SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP
Stephen Abbott, Duke Albanese, Amy Cole, Skip Hanson, Everett Lyons, Mark Kostin, Barbara Miller, David Ruff

NELLIE MAE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
Lynn D’Ambrose, Mary Harrison, Nick Lorenzen, Beth Miller, Charlie Toulmin, Jessica Spohn

RESEARCH NOTE

Global Best Practices was researched and developed by the New England Secondary School Consortium, which includes the Great Schools Partnership and department of education staff from Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Preliminary drafts of this tool were reviewed and vetted by Michelle LaPointe of LaPointe Analysis and Evaluation for Decisionmakers, the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research, and Joseph DiMartino at the Center for Secondary School Redesign. Michelle LaPointe is the author of the Global Best Practices literature review, which outlines the specific research literature consulted during the development of this tool. The Academy for Educational Development’s High School Reform Strategy Toolkit (highschooltoolkit.com) was also consulted extensively, and many of its recommended strategies and practices have been incorporated.

The New England Secondary School Consortium and the Great Schools Partnership are solely responsible for the contents of this document and any inadvertent factual errors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Stephen Abbott
Director of Communications
Great Schools Partnership

MAIL
482 Congress Street, Suite 500
Portland, Maine 04101

PHONE (207) 773-0505
EMAIL sabbott@greatschoolspartnership.org
The New England Secondary School Consortium is a pioneering regional partnership committed to fostering forward-thinking innovations in the design and delivery of secondary education across the New England region. The five partner states of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont believe that our bold vision, shared goals, and innovative strategies will empower us to close persistent achievement gaps, promote greater educational equity and opportunity for all students, and lead our educators into a new era of secondary schooling. The Consortium’s goal is to ensure that every public high school student in our states receives an education that prepares them for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of the 21st century.

From the schoolhouse to the statehouse, the Consortium is working to develop and support bold educational strategies that empower the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders to be prosperous and knowledgeable participants in our global community. The members of the Consortium recognize that the traditional ways of educating students are no longer aligned with today’s civic and professional expectations, and that the time has come to rethink the traditional high school experience on a regional scale. By building equitable systems of public secondary education in each of the five partner states, the Consortium plans to make the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that were once the possession of a few the universal standard for all. To this end, the Consortium will support the development of high-performing, internationally competitive schools and educational experiences that will better mirror the lives and learning needs of today’s students. No longer limited by building design, geography, or educational convention, we envision these high-performing schools becoming versatile community learning centers that prioritize individual learning needs, blend secondary and postsecondary experiences, provide engaging educational opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, and offer a variety of student-designed pathways to graduation—all while emphasizing global understanding, multicultural awareness, technological literacy, real-world applications, and other challenging 21st century skills.

The Consortium is funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the largest philanthropy in New England focused exclusively on education, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Great Schools Partnership, a nonprofit school-support organization based in Portland, Maine, is the Consortium’s lead coordinator.