



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN IN ACTION

MARCH 22-23, 2012 NORWOOD, MA

NESSC Vision

Vision

The New England Secondary School Consortium envisions every adolescent in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont graduating from a new generation of high-performing, internationally competitive high schools prepared for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of our interconnected global society.

NESSC Goals

1. Increase five year graduation rates across each of the five states.
2. Decrease annual dropout rates across each of the five states.
3. Increase the percentage of students enrolling in two- and four-year college-degree programs or pursuing industry-certified accredited postsecondary certificates.
4. Increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school college ready.

NESSC Objectives

Modify or enhance state policy, practice, and public will to:

- 1) base high school graduation decisions on students' achievement of learning standards
- 2) multiple and flexible learning pathways that all lead to a college-ready diploma.
- 3) develop accountability processes that will ensure system accountability



Why Are We Hosting this Conference?

- To celebrate our successes even as we acknowledge the work that still lies ahead
- To share examples of high-impact strategies and practices that are working in real New England schools
- To build upon this strong work already underway in our five states
- To continue connections between research, practice, and policy
- To support networking now and after the conference

High School Redesign in Action...

...by the numbers

- More than **450 PARTICIPANTS!**
- **15 PRESENTATIONS:** secondary school redesign work shared *by educators for educators*
- Discussion of significant regional issues: **NESSC Objectives, Educator Effectiveness, Messaging, and Panel with USED & State Leaders**

NESSC State Leads

CONNECTICUT

Barbara Beaudin

MAINE

Don Siviski

Deb Friedman

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Paul Leather

Roberta Tenney

RHODE ISLAND

Sharon Lee

VERMONT

Tom Alderman

NESSC State Liaisons

CONNECTICUT

Janet Garagliano

MAINE

Mark Kostin

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Skip Hanson

RHODE ISLAND

Marcia Cross

VERMONT

Greg Young

Recognitions

- **Nellie Mae Education Foundation**
- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**
- **Rhode Island Foundation**
- **Davis Family Foundation**
- **Teachers, students, and administrators from our 15 presenting teams**
- **UMass Donahue Institute**
- **State Departments of Education**
- **GSP & NESSC Staff**

Thursday Afternoon

AGENDA

1 PM	Welcome
1:30 PM	Focusing our work: Proficiency-Based Graduation, Personalized Learning Pathways, and Accountability for Action
3:45 PM	Concurrent Sessions - Round 1
5 PM	Hors d'Oeuvres
5:30 PM	Speed Networking
7 PM	Dinner on your own



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An NESSC Presentation

Focusing Our Work: Proficiency- Based Graduation, Personalized Learning Pathways, and Accountability for Action

PRESENTERS

DAVID RUFF

Great Schools Partnership

MARK KOSTIN

Great Schools Partnership

NESSC Objectives

Modify or enhance state policy, practice, and public will to:

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Proficiency-based Graduation

What's wrong with what we have?

Credit-based diplomas are not accurate indications of student learning

Credit-based diplomas struggle to recognize learning outside of the school building

The process of earning a credit-based diploma provides limited feedback to improve instruction or the learning process

Proficiency-based Graduation

What is this?

Students present evidence that demonstrates achievement of specific learning standards

Evidence comes from across content areas both within and outside of the school building, includes student efforts over extended periods of time, and consists of teacher-designed and student-designed assignments and assessments

Proficiency-based Graduation

What is this?

Students can graduate sooner or continue longer than four years, placing increased emphasis on the quality of learning rather than time

Students have multiple opportunities and formats to demonstrate success

Proficiency-based Graduation

What is this?

The process includes the student and others in a reflective process to determine readiness to graduate, and takes place over the entire secondary school learning experience.

Proficiency-based Graduation

Why this strategy?

Tying graduation decisions to actual demonstrations of learning provides a clearer and more accurate understanding of student learning.

Performance assessments enable students to take increased responsibility for their learning and deepen student relevance.

Proficiency-based Graduation

Why this strategy?

It increases the likelihood of students graduating ready for college, work, and citizenship

Facilitates accurate student support to address areas of concern

It provides teachers with an improved means to assess their instructional practice

Proficiency-based Graduation

Why this strategy?

It enables students to better understand their learning and how to improve it

It give parents/guardians a better understanding of their child's learning enabling increased support.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

What's wrong with what we have?

It expects students to progress at the same pace despite differences in current abilities and past learning, expects similar levels of quality in learning, denies students the capacity to move through learning at a faster pace, and assumes that all learning structures work for all students.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

What's wrong with what we have?

Current secondary school structures provide students varying levels of choice regarding courses but provide limited different learning pathways that move beyond the current course organizing structure.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

What's wrong with what we have?

While the system appears to provide “choice” for students, these choices are seldom student - designed, seldom incorporate student input beyond course signup, and are predominantly led and organized by adult educators.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

What is this?

Different routes that students take to attain common learning standards.

Offered with current middle and high school programs as part of the school

Regional state programs that offer opportunities undoable for single districts (for example, virtual learning or dual enrollment programs)

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

What is this?

Takes advantage of learning outside of school and enables students to design unique pathways

Increases ownership by actively engaging students in their learning

Enables students to choose to attend college, be ready for work, and contribute as citizens. Different learning pathways may provide additional skills and knowledge beyond the core learning standards.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

Why this strategy?

Implementing this system—including pathways designed by students—increases the likelihood that learning styles will match instructional styles

Aligning learning and instructional styles increases the likelihood of meeting student interests and aspirations, raising student voice and choice, and resulting in increased motivation, engagement, and success for students.

Multiple & Flexible Pathways

Why this strategy?

Such increased motivation will lead to higher and deeper levels of mastery.

Ultimately, increases in engagement and deeper levels of mastery will lead to more students attaining a diploma and being ready for college, careers, and citizenship.

Learner-centered Accountability

What's wrong with what we have?

In general, accountability systems measure student achievement but fail to gather data on the school processes that support such achievement

This lack of data provides little insight into how best to improve the system and often results in schools making erroneous decisions

Capacity to change is assumed but seldom developed

Learner-centered Accountability

What's wrong with what we have?

Embarrassment—identifying winners and losers—
does not promote thoughtful change

This has often resulted in the narrowing of the curriculum, focused attention on the results of a single test, and in some cases, lead to out right cheating.

Learner-centered Accountability

What is this?

Measures student achievement and attainment and provides data on the impact of instructional practices, organizational designs, and leadership on student learning.

Requires multiple measures including performance assessment as well as standardized testing

Learner-centered Accountability

What is this?

Assesses students when ready outside of artificial uniformed times

Puts data into the hands of educators, students, parents, and community members in a timely fashion.

Learner-centered Accountability

Why this?

Increases the likelihood of effective practices and decreases ineffective practices

Increases support for the specific steps required to achieve positive results and eliminates those steps with harmful and negative effects on learning.

Learner-centered Accountability

Why this?

And by increasing effectiveness, students will learn more, graduate at higher percentages, and be better prepared for life after graduation.

Table Conversation

Introduce each other

Probing Questions:

How would implementation of these leverage points ripple out across your school and district?

What else would change as a result of these initial changes?

What learning opportunities would open for students?

NESSC Theory of Change

Interplay and necessity of aligning:

Policy

Practice

Public Will

NESSC Theory of Change - Background

Schools are extremely adept at sidestepping policy.

Compliance often results in prescriptive methodology

Schools and districts often find themselves as the outliers from their colleagues

Changes in policy without accompanying changes in practice leads to schools working around the policy.

Changes in practice without supportive policy results in limited impact and sustainability.

NESSC Theory of Change - Background

In general, people are unable to understand what learning might look like outside of their personal experiences.

The New England public remains a significant player in any change undertaken by schools

The public must understand and support significant changes if these are to be successful and stick.

NESSC Theory of Change

Systemic change—at scale—requires simultaneous changes in state and local policy; practice; and public will.

Table Conversation

Probing Questions:

When have you seen these three areas of work overlap successfully?

When have you seen efforts slowed because of a lack of attention to one of these areas?

Gauging Your Current Reality

Leverage Point Readiness Assessment

Concepts are presented in linear fashion; they probably don't play out this way

In most cases your work will be at different steps

Significant differences across steps could lead to difficulties

Gauging Your Current Reality

Leverage Point Readiness Assessment

In school teams, circle the stage you are in for each section and each NCESSC objective

Which of the 3 NCESSC objectives is most important to your school and district at this time?

What might you do next?

What do you need to know?

Review of the Conference Program

Looking at your needs, what presentations at this conference could be most helpful?



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