



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

NEW ENGLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL CONSORTIUM
STRATEGIC PLAN: JULY 2012 – JUNE 2016

Adopted by NESSC Council on 4/27/2012



Strategic Plan July 2012 – June 2016

Version 5.0

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THE NEW ENGLAND REALITY

Since the publishing of *A Nation at Risk*, educational reform in America has largely mirrored the actions of Sisyphus—pushing the rock of traditional education up hill, experiencing some moderate success, but often being run over as the rock slides back, leaving us a bit tattered and our schools hanging on to an antiquated system. Our efforts at finding better ways to move the rock have hidden a fundamental truth—not only have advances in knowledge regarding teaching and learning changed the scientific realities of this rock, the needs of society aren't even incorporated into the hill we've been trying to overcome.

In June, 2011, approximately 80,000¹ seniors in high schools across Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont honored the venerable tradition of high school graduation; they stood up, walked across a stage to the applause of family and friends, received their diplomas, accepted handshakes, and were sent forth on a journey that encompasses the rest of their lives. But this cover only masks the real story. What lies ahead for many students is anything but a kind right-of-passage to a fulfilling and prosperous future.

Once plentiful employment opportunities are no longer readily available for these students as employment in manufacturing, agriculture, fishing, and forestry have migrated to other areas of the world. Potential employment is rapidly shifting from our hands to our heads, but our policies, our practices, and public perceptions have not changed. Currently, our state policy context only touches upon concepts of learning that move beyond the classroom walls, still being bounded by 20th century notions of time, teaching, and content. While our schools are staffed by committed and in most cases capable teachers, our educators lack the capacity to fully engage today's students in fundamentally different models of learning. And problematically, on top of these concerns, the public largely envisions education in their school districts as working—despite data to the contrary.

The situation borders on immoral when we realize that approximately 1 out of 5 students in these five states failed to even reach the current low bar of graduation².

Over the past three years, our five states have set out to work collaboratively across state lines, creating the New England Secondary School Consortium, an organic and vibrant organization committed to fundamentally reshaping learning for the students of today. Based on significant success and support, the Consortium has developed a strategic plan to craft goals and actions for the next four years. While this work will take place in an evolving context which will necessitate some level of ongoing redesign, this plan lays out the commitments and direction we intend to pursue.

¹ NESSC Key Indicators, Phase II Technical Report, UMass Donahue Institute, July, 2011.

² NESSC Key Indicators, Phase II Technical Report, UMass Donahue Institute, July, 2011.

SECTION I: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONSORTIUM

The NESSC is a regional support initiative that organizes and supports the five states of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to undertake coordinated actions in the pursuit of common, agreed-upon goals. As a goal-driven initiative, the NESSC is not confined to any specific programmatic structure. Although the five member states employ similar reform strategies, each state has been developing, and will continue to develop, a comprehensive secondary-school improvement plan that is customized to meet the specific needs and contexts within each state.

Over the past three years, the Consortium has made significant progress on multiple fronts including the development of a regional policy agenda; passage of policy in each state aligned with this policy agenda; creation and implementation of the League of Innovative Schools; distribution of *Leadership Briefs* to all school board members, state legislators, state board of education members, superintendents, and secondary school principals in all five states; the analysis of practices world-wide that lead to high performance followed by the development of *Global Best Practices*, a tool designed to guide schools in the change process; the consummation of a five state agreement on capturing common metrics on graduation rates, drop-out rates, and college matriculation; the mobilization of influential champions in multiple professions in all five states; and the receipt of national recognition for innovative progress.

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.

By building equitable systems of public secondary education in each of our states, we envision the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that were once the possession of a few becoming the universal standard for all. Our students will not only be proficient in the traditional academic disciplines, but they will be creative thinkers, adaptable workers, and informed citizens equipped to face the diverse challenges of the 21st century.

We see our traditional public high schools evolving into versatile community learning centers that prioritize individual learning needs above other concerns, 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 demanding 21st-century skills and proficiencies.

As we forge ambitious, forward-thinking partnerships among states, educational organizations, postsecondary institutions, and schools to leverage resources and expertise in pursuit of our common mission, we envision a fundamental cultural shift taking hold in the hearts and minds of our educators, policy makers, parents, and citizens as the traditional concept of the American high school is redefined to mirror the lives, interests, and learning needs of today's students.

Mission

The New England Secondary School Consortium develops and supports bold educational innovations that will empower the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders to be prosperous, knowledgeable, and responsible participants in our global community.

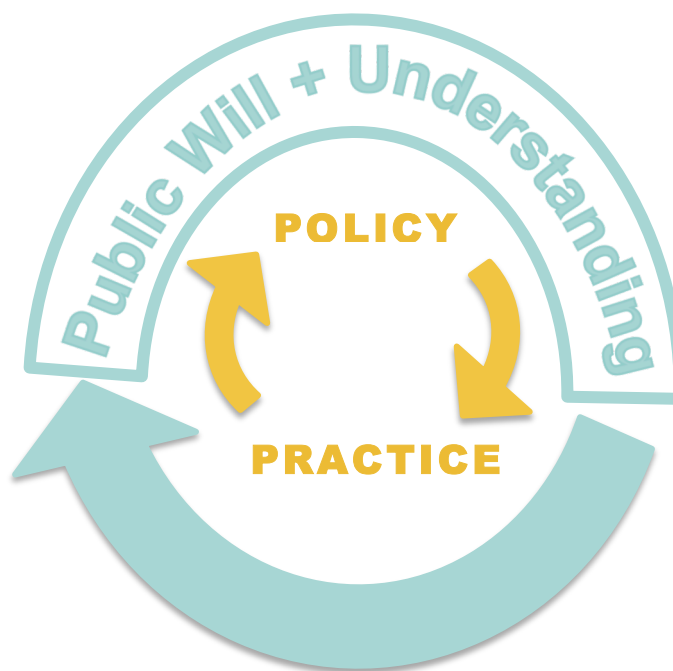
Theory of Action

The need for educational redesign is driven by the reality of the world our students will experience. Currently, rapidly-changing employment and economic opportunities require ever-increasing levels of learning. While economic forecasts predict that 80% of new employment opportunities will require some level of post-secondary learning, only about 52% of our entering ninth grade students end up graduating from high school and enrolling in 2 or 4 year college programs five years later. Too many of our students are obviously falling short.

This reality has been forefront in our efforts to create and implement our multistate collaborative over the past three years. These efforts have enabled us to build a strong network that now needs to look beyond our initial existence and create the strategic plan laid out here. Towards this end, we have built upon our past experiences and research on similar efforts undertaken across political contexts and at scale around the world. Furthermore, we have explicitly looked at specific strategies to change policy or practice at scale, even if done in isolation from each other. Such efforts as the Southern Regional Education Board, the success in the Province of Ontario, and even local efforts like the NMEF Policy Continuum have influenced this work. In addition, the research conducted by the NESSC State Leads and the Great Schools Partnership that produced *Global Best Practices* and follow-up research conducted by Michelle LaPointe examining governmental systems change have impacted both our theory of action and our objectives.

One very clear understanding realized from our experience and research into the success of systemic change at scale is the need for both strategic clarity and tactical freedom. Success at scale has required clarity in goals, frequent measurement of progress concerning these goals, a select number of objectives and aligned strategies, and broad annual steps towards achievement of these objectives. However, success has ultimately come when the efforts have remained nimble, able to tactically adapt to and take advantage of opportunities as they have arisen. Success has not resulted from a lock-step approach, but rather from a thoughtful approach that changes as needs and opportunities present themselves. This realization – the importance of strategic clarity *and* tactical freedom -- has become a hallmark of the NESSC as we encourage different approaches by states, learn from these different approaches, and retain the ability to take advantage of various opportunities.

Our theory of action is based on the premise that systemic change—at scale—requires simultaneous changes in state and local policy; practice; and public will. Historically, reform efforts have focused on either changing policy or practice. Few have focused on changing public perceptions. Very few—if any—efforts have actively worked on all three areas outlined in our theory of action. We will not change the outcomes of learning without realizing changes in these three areas. Currently, state



and local policies provide minimal incentives to schools to operate in ways that align with the NESSC vision, and problematically, in many cases, go so far as to discourage schools from implementing many of these ideas. While educators certainly want quality outcomes for their students, typical practice in our schools does not embrace the ideas of the NESSC vision. Far too often, learning in our schools is bound artificially by time, only acknowledges learning under the control of a certified teacher, operates in a context unlike any other that our students will encounter, and results in highly uneven academic results. Teachers who desire better, don't know how to work better. Finally, the New England system of governance places high importance on local control. Our numerous small districts have significant community and parental input—but are often structured around maintaining the inefficient practices experienced by the adults in our communities. While everyone wants better learning for students, few are able to understand what this learning might look like outside of their personal experiences.

These three concerns are impacted by each other, a reality easily seen by numerous failed attempts to change our educational system. When systemic change is attempted only using the lever of state policy, school districts are extremely adept at sidestepping the intent of the policy. Efforts to enforce compliance usually end up with prescriptive methodology that fails to operate well within different contexts across a state. At the same time, schools and districts that have engaged in significant change with practice often find themselves as the outliers from their colleagues, and far too often operating outside of state policies. Rather than operating in isolation, the Consortium theory of action requires the simultaneous change of both practice and policy. Changes in policy without accompanying changes in practice that supports a particular policy leads to schools figuring out ways to work around the policy. Changes in practice without supportive policy results in limited impact and sustainability. The Consortium intends to—and has over the past three years—simultaneously created effective pressure and support through both policy change and on-the-ground support for practice within schools.

While we envision broad and deep changes in policy, practice, and public will, we need to narrow and sharpen our focus on specific targets of change that will have a “ripple effect” on the system, essentially changing key levers that will in turn impact a series of other changes. To this end, we have identified four objectives:

- 1) the implementation of proficiency-based graduation;
- 2) the implementation of multiple, flexible learning pathways;
- 3) the implementation of learner-centered accountability systems; and
- 4) development of organizational sustainability.

For each of these objectives, we need to engage in changes in state and local policy, in on-the-ground practice, and in public will and understanding.

These ideas have been endorsed by key champions—both formal and informal leaders within each state. We have identified an initial set of key champions who are active in the NESSC Council and strategic action teams. In addition, each state continues to recruit key champions who can espouse, promote and implement changes aligned with the NESSC objectives. Integrated in our strategies are numerous activities designed to expand this circle of champions.

Policy to support these objectives is addressed through a regional policy framework has been created and endorsed by the state commissioners and their boards of education in each state. Each state is engaged in moving these objectives at the policy level through individual state plans, acknowledging the support across state lines while specific implementation will vary.

As stated above, a theory of action that only operates on policy will inevitably fail without support from actual practice. To this end, the NESSC has developed the League of Innovative Schools to promote and support changes in practice that align with the NESSC objectives. The

League is a major departure from existing school reform models. Historically, school redesign has followed one of two major pathways: (1) an open-invitation, limited-accountability network that any school can join, or (2) an intensive support model in which significant resources are committed to a small number of schools with the intention of replicating successful practices in other schools.

While these approaches have achieved success, both have failed to realize sustainable, large-scale systemic improvements across states or regions—which is the Consortium’s goal. Far too often, broad support networks embrace such a wide variety of ideas that breadth is prioritized over depth, and significant change fails to materialize. Alternatively, the progress made by model schools is rarely reproduced at scale or replicated in schools that lack similar levels of funding and support.

The League of Innovative Schools pulls together the best features of these disparate transformation models, while striving to overcome the limitations of each. Our regional network will support deep, systemic improvement work while guiding and encouraging peer collaboration to accelerate and strengthen the process. Instead of asking schools to emulate others, the network will engage schools in an ongoing exchange of professional learning, sharing, reflection, and growth. Instead of holding up a handful of quality schools as exemplars, a significant number of schools across the region will work together to collaboratively determine the best strategies to adopt and the expected measures of quality and progress. While every member school will make the same commitment to improve, the League recognizes and embraces the fact that schools progress in different ways and at different rates.

Certainly, scale remains a major concern for the NESSC, having seen far too many thoughtful changes fail to broaden and expand beyond the initial implementers. Our belief is that many efforts fail at scale due to historical inertia and our human inability to break free from the perceived norm. While schools differ, the variation in programming and process is relatively limited, existing along a bell curve. To change this bell curve, we need to get enough schools operating outside of the bell curve, creating enough dissonance between the extremes of the curve to pull the middle forward. Once this happens, the public understanding of learning changes.

Unfortunately, far too many community members and legislators fail to understand the new concepts of learning espoused by the NESSC, resting upon an historical notion that higher levels of learning for all students is not necessary. These are the people making the payments that enable our schools to operate; they will not buy an educational system they don’t understand. And if the public doesn’t support these new ideas of learning at scale, Consortium efforts will fail to penetrate deeply or sustainably.

Taken together, these ideas serve as the Theory of Action for the Consortium. Succinctly, if we change current practice concerning graduation, learning pathways, and accountability, we will realize positive progress towards the NESSC goals. To change these practices, we must focus on strategic changes and their implementation in state policy, practice, and in educating the public. Our strategic plan follows these ideas.

A Model of Collaboration – Across Districts and States

Secondary school reform is not a new initiative; schools have been trying to change how they operate for numerous years—and states have been attempting to support this change just as long. Unfortunately, while we can point to strong and effective schools in each of our states, we can not argue that we have implemented systemic and broad change that mirrors the vision of NESSC or delivers the goals we have established.

The lack of collegial support that has plagued individual schools has plagued states. When individual schools have implemented fundamentally different approaches, these new approaches are often seen by others—both educators and the public—as troubling. Operating in isolation usually results in too much opposition. The same holds true at the state level. When states change policies, supports, or mandates to encourage change in schools, educators, policy makers, and the general public often oppose these ideas arguing that if the ideas were so good other states would also be undertaking these efforts. The five state collaboration deliberately operates to overcome this.

Certainly, operating across five states with five different political contexts raises significant logistical issues. However, we believe that the understanding, the political cover, and the collegial pressure provided by this structure will enable us to realize a break-through in our efforts. Powerfully, early responses drawn from evaluations on the NESSC demonstrate that the participants are feeling and seeing this impact.

Strategic Plan Definitions

NESSC Goals: long-term targets for significant growth in student attainment and achievement scores. All activities work in concert toward the attainment of these goals.

Performance Indicators: annual targets to demonstrate growth towards meeting the NESSC Goals

Objectives: overall systemic changes that once achieved will realize progress in the goals.

Strategies: detailed multiyear activities aligned with each objective that, once implemented, support attainment of the objective.

Action Steps: tactical steps that will take place during a specific year to support implementation of a specific strategy. These are determined both by the NESSC as a whole and on a state by state level. NESSC activities are focused on cross-state support and activities that would be difficult—if not undoable—by a single state. Individual state action steps support specific state strategies that operate within the political, cultural, and economic climate of the state.

Annual Outcomes: measurement of progress towards achieving objectives.

SECTION II: NESSC GOALS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The goals of the NESSC have remained relatively stable over our existence; for this strategic plan we have refined the goals and added annual performance indicators. As shown below, we have numerous performance indicators for each goal, disaggregating by state, and for socioeconomic status, for black/African American students, and for Hispanic students within each state. While numerous, these performance indicators better enable us to understand progress for the NESSC as a whole and within each individual state.

Progress on-performance indicators is based on a common rate of growth starting at different baselines. This strategy enables us to decrease performance gaps, but also acknowledges different starting points for each state and different subgroups within each state. Growth rates are determined by reducing the percentage point of students who fail to demonstrate proficiency by a certain percentage, then adding those percentage points back on to the original percentage³.

The NESSC has developed measurement agreements across the five states for all of the performance indicators identified below. Data collection and computation processes for graduation rates, drop-out rates, and college enrollment rates have been endorsed by the commissioners. The ninth-grade cohort college enrollment performance indicator uses the ninth grade as the basis for figuring out the percentage of college enrollment rather than the graduation class. Using this metric enables us to track college matriculation outside of the high school graduation rate. In all cases, the ninth grade cohort college matriculation rate will be a lower percentage than the high school graduation cohort college matriculation rate.

The NESSC fully realizes that our efforts are not the only efforts that are pushing similar goals, a reality that we openly embrace. However, we have set smaller percentage increases in the first two years of our strategic plan, believing that more significant growth will happen as the policy environment changes, more schools are engaged in the League of Innovative Schools, and the public more openly understands and supports these changes.

Goal 1: Increase five-year graduation rates across each of the five states.

Performance Indicators: **Bold** are actual numbers; all others are targets

Five Year Graduation Rate by Class—Overall								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	83.9	84.7	85.5	86.2	87.6	88.8	89.9	90.9
ME	82.6	83.5	84.3	85.1	86.6	87.9	89.1	90.2
NH	83.9	84.7	85.5	86.2	87.6	88.8	89.9	90.9
RI	78.2	79.3	80.3	81.3	83.2	84.9	86.4	87.7
VT	89.2	89.7	90.3	90.7	91.7	92.5	93.2	93.9
Average	83.6	84.4	85.2	85.9	87.3	88.6	89.7	90.8

³ For example, with a 60% five-year graduation rate, 40% of the students fail to graduate. Reducing failure by 10%, represents 4 percentage points from the original 40%. Adding these four percentage points back on to the original success rate of 60%, our target for the next year would be 64%. This system promotes larger percentage point gains for poorer performing states, schools, districts, or subgroups enabling us to decrease the performance gap.

Five Year Graduation Rate by Class—Poverty								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	67.1	68.7	70.3	71.8	74.6	77.2	79.4	81.5
ME	75.2	76.4	77.6	78.7	80.9	82.8	84.5	86.0
NH	71.6	73.0	74.4	75.7	78.1	80.3	82.2	84.0
RI	67.5	69.1	70.7	72.1	74.9	77.4	79.7	81.7
VT	79.2	80.2	81.2	82.2	83.9	85.6	87.0	88.3
Average	72.1	73.5	74.8	76.1	78.5	80.6	82.6	84.3

Five Year Graduation Rate by Class—Black								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	71.9	73.3	74.6	75.9	78.3	80.5	82.4	84.2
ME	75.0	76.3	77.4	78.6	80.7	82.6	84.4	85.9
NH	69.5	71.0	72.5	73.9	76.5	78.8	80.9	82.8
RI	71.9	73.3	74.6	75.9	78.3	80.5	82.4	84.2
VT	84.9	85.7	86.4	87.1	88.3	89.5	90.6	91.5
Average	74.6	75.9	77.1	78.3	80.4	82.4	84.1	85.7

Five Year Graduation Rate by Class—Hispanic								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	64.0	65.8	67.5	69.1	72.2	75.0	77.5	79.7
ME	75.2	76.4	77.6	78.7	80.9	82.8	84.5	86.0
NH	70.7	72.2	73.6	74.9	77.4	79.7	81.7	83.5
RI	67.4	69.0	70.6	72.0	74.8	77.4	79.6	81.7
VT	79.4	80.4	81.4	82.3	84.1	85.7	87.1	88.4
Average	71.3	72.8	74.1	75.4	77.9	80.1	82.1	83.9

Goal 2: Decrease annual dropout rates across each of the five states

Performance Indicators: **Bold** are actual numbers; all others are targets

Drop Out Rate—Overall								
*based on 10% fewer students not dropping out 2010-2012; and 20% fewer students 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	15.8	11.9	10.7	9.6	7.7	6.2	4.9	3.9
ME	17.4	10.9	9.8	8.8	7.1	5.7	4.5	3.6
NH	15.7	6.3	5.7	5.1	4.1	3.3	2.6	2.1
RI	21.8	17.4	15.7	14.1	11.3	9.0	7.2	5.8
VT	11.2	10.5	9.5	8.5	6.8	5.4	4.4	3.5
Average	16.4	11.4	10.3	9.2	7.4	5.9	4.7	3.8

Drop Out Rate—Poverty								
*based on 10% fewer students not dropping out 2010-2012; and 20% fewer students 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	32.0	24.3	21.9	19.7	15.7	12.6	10.1	8.1
ME	24.8	18.5	16.7	15.0	12.0	9.6	7.7	6.1
NH	27.7	12.3	11.1	10.0	8.0	6.4	5.1	4.1
RI	32.5	25.5	23.0	20.7	16.5	13.2	10.6	8.5
VT	21.6	18.8	16.9	15.2	12.2	9.7	7.8	6.2
Average	27.7	19.9	17.9	16.1	12.9	10.3	8.2	6.6

Black								
*based on 10% fewer students not dropping out 2010-2012; and 20% fewer students 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	27.2	20.1	18.1	16.3	13.0	10.4	8.3	6.7
ME	25.0	11.9	10.7	9.6	7.7	6.2	4.9	3.9
NH	29.8	9.1	8.2	7.4	5.9	4.7	3.8	3.0
RI	28.1	23.1	20.8	18.7	15.0	12.0	9.6	7.7
VT	14.5	18.5	16.7	15.0	12.0	9.6	7.7	6.1
Average	24.9	16.5	14.9	13.4	10.7	8.6	6.9	5.5

Hispanic								
*based on 10% fewer students not dropping out 2010-2012; and 20% fewer students 2013-2016)								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	35.5	24.5	22.1	19.8	15.9	12.7	10.2	8.1
ME	24.8	13.1	11.8	10.6	8.5	6.8	5.4	4.3
NH	28.0	11.1	10.0	9.0	7.2	5.8	4.6	3.7
RI	32.6	25.4	22.9	20.6	16.5	13.2	10.5	8.4
VT	17.8	18.5	16.7	15.0	12.0	9.6	7.7	6.1
Average	27.7	18.5	16.7	15.0	12.0	9.6	7.7	6.1

Goal 3: Increase the percentage of students enrolling in two- and four-year college-degree programs or pursuing industry-certified accredited postsecondary certificates.

Performance Indicators: **Bold** are actual numbers; all others are targets

College Enrollment Rate (NSC)—Overall								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	74.8	76.1	77.3	78.4	80.6	82.5	84.2	85.8
ME	69.1	70.6	72.1	73.5	76.2	78.5	80.7	82.6
NH	63.7	65.5	67.2	68.9	72.0	74.8	77.3	79.6
RI	70.4	71.9	73.3	74.6	77.2	79.4	81.5	83.3
VT	61.0	63.0	64.8	66.6	69.9	72.9	75.6	78.1
Average	67.8	69.4	70.9	72.4	75.2	77.6	79.9	81.9

College Enrollment Rate (NSC)—Poverty								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	54.6	56.9	59.0	61.1	65.0	68.5	71.6	74.5
ME	54.5	56.8	58.9	61.0	64.9	68.4	71.6	74.4
NH	39.7	42.7	45.6	48.3	53.5	58.1	62.3	66.1
RI	58.3	60.4	62.4	64.2	67.8	71.0	73.9	76.5
VT	<i>N/A</i>							
Average	51.8	54.2	56.5	58.7	62.8	66.5	69.9	72.9

College Enrollment Rate (NSC)—Black								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	62.8	64.7	66.4	68.1	71.3	74.2	76.7	79.1
ME	68.8	70.4	71.8	73.2	75.9	78.3	80.5	82.4
NH	55.7	57.9	60.0	62.0	65.8	69.2	72.3	75.1
RI	62.0	63.9	65.7	67.4	70.7	73.6	76.2	78.6
VT	61.9	63.8	65.6	67.3	70.6	73.5	76.2	78.6
Average	62.2	64.1	65.9	67.6	70.9	73.8	76.4	78.8

College Enrollment Rate (NSC)—Hispanic								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	64	65.8	67.5	69.1	72.2	75.0	77.5	79.7
ME	49.1	51.6	54.1	56.4	60.8	64.7	68.2	71.4
NH	49.9	52.4	54.8	57.0	61.3	65.2	68.7	71.8
RI	58.7	60.8	62.7	64.6	68.1	71.3	74.2	76.8
VT	50.6	53.1	55.4	57.6	61.9	65.7	69.1	72.2
Average	54.5	56.7	58.9	61.0	64.9	68.4	71.5	74.4

College Enrollment Rate (NSC), 9th Grade Cohort—Overall ⁴								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	56.8	59.9	61.9	63.8	67.4	70.7	73.6	76.2
ME	55.6	57.8	59.9	61.9	65.7	69.1	72.2	75.0
NH	52.2	56.1	58.3	60.4	64.3	67.9	71.1	74.0
RI	N/A							
VT	47.9	48.8	51.3	53.8	58.4	62.5	66.3	69.7
Average	53.1	55.6	57.9	60.0	64.0	67.6	70.8	73.7

College Enrollment Rate (NSC), 9th Grade Cohort—Poverty								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	29.2	33.6	36.9	40.1	46.1	51.5	56.3	60.7
ME	36.9	40.1	43.1	45.9	51.3	56.2	60.6	64.5
NH	26.8	29.9	33.4	36.7	43.0	48.7	53.9	58.5
RI	N/A							
VT	29.8	29.3	32.9	36.2	42.6	48.3	53.5	58.2
Average	30.7	33.2	36.6	39.7	45.8	51.2	56.1	60.5

College Enrollment Rate (NSC), 9th Grade Cohort—Black								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	37.3	36.6	39.8	42.8	48.5	53.7	58.3	76.2
ME	47.6	50.2	52.7	55.1	59.6	63.6	67.3	70.5
NH	37.7	42.7	45.6	48.3	53.4	58.1	62.3	74.0
RI	N/A							
VT	45.3	35.4	38.6	41.7	47.5	52.8	57.5	69.7
Average	41.9	41.2	44.2	47.0	52.3	57.0	61.3	72.6

College Enrollment Rate (NSC), 9th Grade Cohort—Hispanic								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	34.3	32.3	35.7	38.9	45.0	50.5	55.5	76.2
ME	37.4	40.5	43.5	46.3	51.7	56.5	60.9	64.8
NH	32.8	37.1	40.3	43.2	48.9	54.0	58.6	74.0
RI	N/A							
VT	27.1	38.0	41.1	44.0	49.6	54.6	59.2	69.7
Average	32.9	37.0	40.1	43.1	48.8	53.9	58.5	71.2

⁴ The 9th grade cohort rates looks at the percentage of incoming 9th grade students who enroll in college five years later. Using this formula, we are able to more fully understand if increases in college enrollment rate is due to a decrease in graduation rate.

Goal 4: Increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school college ready.

Performance Indicators: **Bold** are actual numbers; all others are targets

College Readiness Rates⁵								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	N/A							
ME	N/A							
NH	N/A							
RI	N/A							
VT	N/A							
Average								

Retention Rates, Enrollment in Third Semester⁶								
*based on 5% fewer students not missing the target metric 2010-2012; and 10% fewer 2013-2016								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CT	N/A							
ME	N/A							
NH	N/A							
RI	N/A							
VT	N/A							
Average								

⁵ The NESSC is in the process of creating a college ready metric. At this time, we do not have these data points.

⁶ The NESSC states are in the process of collecting these data points. At this time, we do not have these data points. States anticipate full collection of these data by July 1, 2012.

SECTION III: OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

While the goals of the NESSC have been consistent since the start of the effort, the objectives and strategies have been much less so as the organization explored different avenues to realize our goals. However, over the past year, the following objectives have become the consistent focal points of our collective efforts. These have shaped the formation of state and local policy, the League of Innovative Schools, and even reorganization of state education agencies. The NESSC objectives are:

Implementation of Proficiency-Based Graduation: Graduation from secondary schools will be based on the explicit demonstration that students have acquired the expected knowledge and skills outlined in each of the content area and cross-school standards identified by their states and school districts. Students may demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, but proficiency is assessed using clear expectations of proficiency levels.

Implementation of Multiple and Flexible Pathways: Schools and States will create learning options that provide a sequence of learning experiences provided to, and often designed by, every student that 1) accommodates individual student needs, learning styles, interests, and aspirations; 2) includes both in-school and out-of-school learning opportunities; and 3) is aligned with and culminates in all students demonstrating proficiency in expected state and local learning standards.

Implementation of Learner-centered Accountability Systems: States will create accountability processes that ensure integrity across the learning system—measuring, understanding, and improving *both* student learning *and* school, district, and state instructional and organizational systems that support this learning. State policy will ensure student attainment of 21st century skills and knowledge for every student, require accountability for this accomplishment, and provide diagnostic support to promote a cycle of continuous learning.

Development of Organizational Sustainability: NESSC will move to create a series of political and financial supports—none providing an overly disproportionate overall percentage—distributed between state and federal support, local school support, national foundation support, regional foundation support, and assorted fees.

Proficiency-Based Graduation

Historically, students have graduated from high school based on the accumulation of “credits” students earn by successfully passing a series of teacher-developed tests assessing student skill and knowledge on a set of outcomes associated with a curriculum area. In this system, “credits” are based on an aggregate of scores on individual assessments, assignments, and participation. Theoretically, the accumulation of “credits” demonstrates the acquisition of a complete set of knowledge necessary for success in life after high school. In practice, this system has proven to be unreliable in its measurement of student skills and knowledge, lacking in specificity regarding success and failure, and generally less helpful for encouraging learning and student innovation. The system also assumes that all students learn at the same pace, achieving the same depth of learning within the same time frame. Further problematic, the system has little cohesion across students as teachers often use different criteria to determine course passage and credit attainment.

These concerns are not alleviated by requiring students to pass a standardized test. These tests are designed to sort students based on a limited sample of items from a narrow

selection of knowledge and skills within the domain of learning expectations of a particular content area. Consequently, even with such testing, we have a limited understanding of a student's ability to demonstrate deeper and broader areas of the curriculum, including the skills and dispositions we now know are essential to success in both careers and post-secondary learning. When students are not expected to learn or demonstrate these skills and dispositions, schools frequently fail to teach them.

The NESSC states are committed to the creation of state policies, local policies, and local practices that create a graduation decision-making system that replaces or enhances the current system of credit accumulation for graduation. In addition to local requirements that could include the accumulation of credits, students must build a body of evidence that demonstrates achievement of specific learning standards. This evidence must come from across historically-constructed content areas both within and outside of the school building, include student efforts over extended periods of time, and consist of student-designed assignments and assessments, as well as teacher-created assignments and assessments.

In sum, this process must move beyond a check-list of activities or achievements and include the student and others in a reflective process to determine readiness to graduate. While the graduation decision is a culminating event, the development of student engagement, learning, and ownership entailed in this process takes place over the entire secondary school learning experience, impacting teaching and learning throughout a student's time in secondary education.

Multiple and Flexible Learning Pathways

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. Such a system 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. In addition, 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.

The NESSC states propose the creation of state policy, local policy, and local practice that will 1) create middle and high school programs to offer multiple and flexible learning pathways; and 2) create regional state programs that operate in collaboration with secondary schools but offer opportunities undoable for single districts (for example, virtual learning or dual enrollment programs), that all lead to a college-ready diploma. These programs will specifically take advantage of learning outside of school and the organizational structures routinely incorporated as part of schooling. For example, students could learn skills and knowledge—and demonstrate attainment of these—through internships, travel, or volunteer activities. Other students could integrate courses at career and technical centers to more fully expand their learning. Further, the policy will incorporate a degree of latitude to support local adoption and implementation.

By design, these pathways will engage students actively in their learning. In addition to educator-designed pathways, schools will create explicit processes to support students in designing unique and personally appropriate pathways that go beyond those uniformly offered by the school. All learning pathways will enable students to master a common core set of skills and knowledge defined through learning standards. Different learning pathways may provide different additional skills and knowledge beyond the core learning standards. While the flexible

learning pathways will and are expected to differ, all pathways will enable students to choose to apply to, attend, and complete successfully 2- or 4-year college programs, be ready for work, and productive citizenship.

The flexible learning pathways must go beyond the offer of a different selection of the same courses, encompassing different learning styles that actively incorporate and require student choice in learning, not just the selection of courses. Learning pathways must take advantage of learning both within and outside of school courses and acknowledge learning instructors beyond educators within the school building. Students and their parents/guardians will be expected to be the primary drivers in the choice of a learning pathway for each student.

Learner-centered Accountability

Over the past 20 years, both federal and state policy have required increasing amounts of student assessment focused on better understanding the academic attainment of students. Many of these efforts have focused not only on measuring this attainment, but also working to ensure increased levels of equity of achievement for all students. The results of these various assessments have been used for a multitude of purposes.

The NESSC states are committed to the creation of accountability processes that will ensure integrity across the learning system—measuring, understanding, and improving *both* student learning *and* school, district, and state instructional and organizational systems that support this learning. State policy, local policy, and local practice will ensure student attainment of 21st century skills and knowledge for every student, require accountability for this accomplishment, and provide diagnostic support to promote a cycle of continuous learning. This system accountability should effectively and efficiently identify schools and districts that struggle the most to support high levels of student learning.

The foundation for the diagnostic requirements of such a system has already been developed through the NESSC *Global Best Practices Toolkit*. Drawn from quality instructional, leadership, and organizational practices from the US and round the world, the *Global Best Practices Toolkit* provides a general overview of quality practices, not site-specific action steps based on local context.

The goal of such an accountability system is to ensure both transparency of learning results which indicate how well all students and sub-groups are meeting state expectations, and to determine which schools and districts need the most direct and comprehensive support. This system must incorporate state level assessments focused on the Common Core and state standards, assessment systems measuring attainment of cross-cutting, 21st century learning standards, and data collection on the learning systems of support including instructional practice, leadership, organizational design, and school and community collaboration. The results of this system must be shared publically within the school, the district, and the community.

Research conducted over the past 25 years has consistently demonstrated that the quality of daily instruction is the single largest factor concerning student learning under control by schools. Consequently, the accountability system must place specific emphasis on measuring and ensuring that instructional practice is student-centered and personalized—designed to meet the intellectual, developmental, social, and emotional needs of every student. Schools and districts will be required to create measurement processes that identify, collect, share, and analyze aggregate data on instructional practice with both internal educator audiences and external parent and community member audiences.

Organizational Sustainability

Sustaining the NESSC is not a goal of the five states involved in this work, but we realize that realization of our objectives and achievement of our student goals will not be attainable without collective support across our five state—hence the necessity of the NESSC. To this end, we are committed to sustaining this work through a combination of state, federal, local and foundational resources including both financial support and personnel. The NESSC is a collaboration of willing participants who agree to provide resources and time to make this work a reality.

SECTION IV: STRATEGIES & ANNUAL OUTCOMES

Each objective has a set of strategies the NESSC will undertake to achieve the objectives. Aligned with each strategy are annual outcomes outlining annual achievements to fully implement the strategy and realize the objective over the four years. Strategies are linked with each other but are not dependent upon each other.

Objective	Strategies	Annual Outcomes			
		SY 2013	SY 2014	SY 2015	SY 2016
<p>Implementation of Proficiency-Based Graduation: Graduation from secondary schools will be based on the explicit demonstration that students have acquired the expected knowledge and skills outlined in each of the content area and cross-school standards identified by their states and school districts. Students may demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, but proficiency is assessed using clear expectations of proficiency levels.</p>	<p>Policy: modify state policy to support proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 6 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 7 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 8 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation</p>
	<p>Policy: modify local district policy to support proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>25% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>75% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>90% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support proficiency-based graduation</p>
	<p>Practice: create examples of proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state</p>	<p>70% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>80% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>85% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NESSC performance indicators</p>
	<p>Practice: scale up the number of schools implementing proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state</p>	<p>10% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>15% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>20% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>
	<p>Public Will: change public and political perception in support of proficiency-based graduation among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.</p>	<p>Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Increased support for proficiency-based graduation is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders acted in support of proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Increased support for proficiency-based graduation is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders acted in support of proficiency-based graduation</p>	<p>Increased support for proficiency-based graduation is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders acted in support of proficiency-based graduation</p>

Objective	Strategies	Annual Outcomes			
		SY 2013	SY 2014	SY 2015	SY 2016
<p>Implementation of Multiple and Flexible Pathways: Schools and States will create learning options that provide a sequence of learning experiences provided to, and often designed by, every student that 1) accommodates individual student needs, learning styles, interests, and aspirations; 2) includes both in-school and out-of-school learning opportunities; and 3) is aligned with and culminates in all students demonstrating proficiency in expected state and local learning standards.</p>	<p>Policy: modify state policy to support implementation of multiple pathways</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 6 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 7 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 8 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways</p>
	<p>Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of multiple pathways in alignment with state policy</p>	<p>Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting multiple pathways</p>	<p>25% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support multiple pathways</p>	<p>75% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support multiple pathways</p>	<p>90% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support multiple pathways</p>
	<p>Practice: create examples of multiple pathways</p>	<p>60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state</p>	<p>70% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>80% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>85% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>
	<p>Practice: scale up the number of schools providing multiple pathways to students</p>	<p>Each SEA will have organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state</p>	<p>10% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>15% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>20% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>
	<p>Public Will: change public and political perception in support of multiple and flexible pathways among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.</p>	<p>Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for multiple and flexible pathways</p>	<p>Increased support for multiple and flexible pathways is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders act in support of multiple and flexible pathways</p>	<p>Increased support for multiple and flexible pathways is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders act in support of multiple and flexible pathways</p>	<p>Increased support for multiple and flexible pathways is demonstrated through surveys. School board members, education leaders, and business leaders act in support of multiple and flexible pathways</p>

Objective	Strategies	Annual Outcomes			
		SY 2013	SY 2014	SY 2015	SY 2016
<p>Implementation of Learner-centered Accountability Systems: States will create accountability processes that ensure integrity across the learning system—measuring, understanding, and improving both student learning and school, district, and state instructional and organizational systems that support this learning. State policy will ensure student attainment of 21st century skills and knowledge for every student, require accountability for this accomplishment, and provide diagnostic support to promote a cycle of continuous learning.</p>	<p>Policy: modify state policy to create a state learner-centered accountability system</p>	<p>Each state will be at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 6 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 7 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>Each state is at Step 8 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability</p>
	<p>Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of state requirements for a learner-centered accountability system</p>	<p>Sample generic district policy distributed by school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>25% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>75% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support learner-centered accountability</p>	<p>90% of school districts in each state created and passed local policies to support learner-centered accountability</p>
	<p>Practice: create examples of successful implementation of the learner-centered accountability system</p>	<p>60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state</p>	<p>70% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>80% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>	<p>85% of League Schools realized growth targets that parallel NNESSC performance indicators</p>
	<p>Practice: scale up the number of schools successfully implementing the learner-centered accountability system</p>	<p>Each SEA will have organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state</p>	<p>10% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>15% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>	<p>20% of all secondary schools in each state participated in the League</p>
<p>Public Will: change public and political perception in support of learner-centered accountability among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.</p>	<p>Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools Messaging and brochures from each community or business advocacy organization mirror the vision and mission of NNESSC The NNESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website The NNESSC metric on college readiness is posted on each SEA website</p>	<p>Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools The NNESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website</p>	<p>Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools The NNESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website</p>	<p>Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools The NNESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website</p>	

Objective	Strategies	Annual Outcomes			
		SY 2013	SY 2014	SY 2015	SY 2016
<p>Organizational Sustainability: NESSC will move to create a series of political and financial supports—none providing an overly disproportionate overall percentage—distributed between state and federal support, local school support, national foundation support, regional foundation support, and assorted fees.</p>	<p>Get active support from the members of the NESSC Council and leadership teams regarding NESSC strategies and goals within their spheres of influence</p>	<p>Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff</p>	<p>Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff</p>	<p>Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff</p>	<p>Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff</p>
	<p>Identify state and federal funding sources that could be shifted to support NESSC activities</p>	<p>Each state provided through federal and state resources \$25,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools</p>	<p>Each state provided through federal and state resources \$40,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools</p>	<p>Each state provided through federal and state resources \$75,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools</p>	<p>Each state provided through federal and state resources \$100,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools</p>
<p>Establish relationships with local and national funders to align their areas of interest with specific needs of the Consortium</p>	<p>At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.</p>	<p>At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.</p>	<p>At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.</p>	<p>At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.</p>	

SECTION V: NESSC WORK PLAN: JULY 1, 2012—JUNE 30, 2013

This section outlines specific action steps that will be undertaken by the Consortium as a whole that involve each of the states, and coordinated by the Great Schools Partnership. The NESSC Work Plan is designed to assist and support the individual state work plans. Also, please note that all action steps and outcomes are funding dependent; a specific action step may not be completed and an outcome achieved if funding to support that action step is not available. The NESSC Work Plan will be created each spring and finalized by June 30.

		Action Steps				SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy	Work with each state team to create state work plans by August 1	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Provide assistance as identified in state work plans	(See state work plans for specific state actions)		
Policy: modify state policy to support proficiency-based graduation	Work with each state team to create state work plans by August 1	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Provide assistance as identified in state work plans	(See state work plans for specific state actions)	Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation	
Policy: modify local district policy to support proficiency-based graduation	Create sample school district policy by state that supports proficiency-based graduation	Create repository on NESSC website of examples and actual school district policies that support proficiency-based graduation.			Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting proficiency-based graduation	
Practice: create examples of proficiency-based graduation	Focus first of 3 League network meetings on proficiency-based graduation	Create subgroup of League schools focused on PBG for electronic networking			60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state	
Practice: scale up the number of schools implementing proficiency-based graduation	Host 3 webinars showcasing proficiency-based graduation and implementation strategies	Review state standards and Common Core to identify a common set of 21 st century skills	Create a series of rubrics for school usage based on the identified 21 st century skills	Train DOE staff on the rubrics and strategies to support school implementation	Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state	
Public Will: to change public and political perception in support of proficiency-based graduation among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Create <i>Leadership in Action</i> briefs	Increase the number of institutes of higher education who sign the proficiency-based graduation pledge			Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for proficiency-based graduation	

Proficiency-based Graduation

		Action Steps			SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy		Work with each state team to create state work plans by August 1	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways
Multiple Pathways	Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of multiple pathways in alignment with state policy	Create sample school district policy by state that supports multiple pathways	Create repository on NESSC website of examples and actual school district policies that support multiple pathways		Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting multiple pathways
	Practice: create examples of multiple pathways	Focus 2 nd League networking meeting on implementation of multiple pathways			60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state
	Practice: scale up the number of schools providing multiple pathways to students	Host 3 webinars showcasing successful multiple pathways organizational structures in schools and strategies used to achieve this.			Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state
	Public Will: change public and political perception in support of multiple and flexible pathways among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Create <i>Leadership in Action</i> briefings	Create profiles of key champions in each state outlining the different "pathways" they took in their educational careers		Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for multiple and flexible pathways

		Action Steps				SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy		Work with each state team to create state work plans by August 1	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Connect to and influence SBAC and PARCC		
Learner-centered Accountability	Policy: modify state policy to create a state learner-centered accountability system	Work with each state team to create state work plans by August 1	Host feedback sessions for leaders regarding state work plans	Connect to and influence SBAC and PARCC		Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability
	Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of state requirements for a learner-centered accountability system	Create sample school district policy by state that will support state accountability models	Create repository on NNESSC website of examples and actual school district policies that support state accountability models			Sample generic district policy distributed by school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting learner-centered accountability
	Practice: create examples of successful implementation of the learner-centered accountability system	Identify 6 – 10 schools from across the region that are implementing different aspects of learner-centered accountability	Create vignettes of these 6 – 10 schools and distribute via NNESSC website			60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state
	Practice: scale up the number of schools successfully implementing the learner-centered accountability system	Review teacher preparation requirements in each state regarding assessment literacy	Create state cross-walks between teacher prep and state accountability system needs			Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state
	Public Will: change public and political perception in support of learner-centered accountability among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Create links to and from <i>Journalist Glossary</i> and each state website	Create business leader packet and meet individually with at least five key business leaders in each state; get these leaders to support their companies to sign proficiency-based graduation pledge	Vet college readiness metric with commissioners and leads; vet for data availability with data team	Meet with PTA/PTO leaders in each state and explain NNESSC; explore overlaps.	Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools Messaging & brochures from each community or business advocacy organization mirror NNESSC The NNESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website The NNESSC metric on college readiness is posted on each SEA website

		Action Steps					SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy		Host 3 in-person Council meetings	Host 3 video Council meetings	Conduct individual meetings with each Council member to review NESSC and brainstorm collaboration activities	Create year-long calendar by August 30		
Get active support from the members of the NESSC Council and leadership teams regarding NESSC strategies and goals within their spheres of influence		Host 3 in-person Council meetings	Host 3 video Council meetings	Conduct individual meetings with each Council member to review NESSC and brainstorm collaboration activities	Create year-long calendar by August 30		Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff
Identify state and federal funding sources that could be shifted to support NESSC activities		Review all regulations regarding federal funds to states and identify overlap with NESSC objectives and strategies					Each state provided through federal and state resources \$25,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools
Establish relationships with local and national funders to align their areas of interest with specific needs of the Consortium		Conduct state foundation meetings in each state	Implement contract with external development consultant/group to support NESSC funding efforts	Identify 8-12 national foundations with priority overlap with NESSC; Vet list with state commissioners, leads, and current funding partners	Create approach plans for each foundation	Apply for support from 3 – 5 foundations	At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.

Organizational Sustainability

SECTION VI: STATE WORK PLAN FORMAT

Respecting the context and autonomy of each state, specifics action steps to achieve each annual outcome vary. To this end, each state will annually create a state work plan to achieve the annual outcomes. Below is a SAMPLE state work plan:

		SAMPLE State Action Steps				SY 2013 Outcome
Proficiency-based Graduation	Strategy Policy: modify state policy to support proficiency-based graduation Policy: modify local district policy to support proficiency-based graduation	Host informal coffee session with leadership from state professional organizations to explore proficiency-based graduation Vet example of school district policy that supports proficiency-based graduation with school board and superintendents association	Conduct New England school tour with leadership of professional organizations of successful PBG implementation Distribute sample school district policy via superintendents and schools board association websites	Change state school board policy to emphasize proficiency-based graduation option	Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Proficiency-based Graduation Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting proficiency-based graduation	
	Practice: create examples of proficiency-based graduation	Use federal funding to support 3 – 5 League schools to implement proficiency-based graduation	Conduct introductory sessions on PBG at Principals' Conference	Implement school action template	60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state	
	Practice: scale up the number of schools implementing proficiency-based graduation	Conduct initial training sessions with state DOE staff regarding proficiency-based graduation	Conduct monthly support meetings for DOE staff regarding proficiency-based graduation implementation	Communicate current state policy that allows schools to use proficiency-based graduation	Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state	
	Public Will: to change public and political perception in support of proficiency-based graduation among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Create in-state League of Innovative Schools newsletter to highlight proficiency-based graduation schools	Host information session for journalists regarding proficiency-based graduation to educate them on this concept	Conduct visitation tour of schools for key legislators	Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for proficiency-based graduation	

		SAMPLE State Action Steps			SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy					
Multiple Pathways	Policy: modify state policy to support implementation of multiple pathways	Review state board regulations; believe current just revised statute provides necessary flexibility and pressure			Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for Multiple Pathways
	Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of multiple pathways in alignment with state policy	Create sample school district policy to support multiple pathways options in state board regulations	Meet with superintendents association and school board to determine district needs for implementation		Sample generic district policy distributed by each state's school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting multiple pathways
	Practice: create examples of multiple pathways	Identify 3 – 5 League schools to receive foundation funds to support development of personal learning pathways for students	Conduct a series of day-long seminars for educators in these schools to work as project leads in their schools	Create action plans to implement strategies in September 2013	60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state
	Practice: scale up the number of schools providing multiple pathways to students	Implement virtual learning school open to all in-state students	Review state board regulations with SEA staff to identify opportunities for schools		Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state
	Public Will: change public and political perception in support of multiple and flexible pathways among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Collect and distribute quality examples of multiple pathways through commissioners weekly update	Work with ### council member to schedule multiple pathways presentation at business roundtable meeting	Work with ### council member to get a series of school reports on state public radio series.	Baselines are established using an electronic survey among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders registering support for multiple and flexible pathways

Strategic						SAMPLE State Action Steps						SY 2013 Outcome				
Learner-centered Accountability						Policy: modify state policy to create a state learner-centered accountability system	Meet with state superintendents to update them of federal requirements and state actions	Create and distribute monthly superintendent email updates on state actions	Coordinate with NESSC colleagues to create state accountability framework							Each state is at Step 5 on NMEF Policy Change Continuum for learner-centered accountability
						Policy: modify local district policy to support implementation of state requirements for a learner-centered accountability system	Identify areas in state accountability framework that will need local policy requirements	Create sample school district policy	Vet policy samples with superintendents' organization; post on line							Sample generic district policy distributed by school board association and/or superintendents' association supporting learner-centered accountability
						Practice: create examples of successful implementation of the learner-centered accountability system	Coordinate with current SIG schools to operate as initial implementers of the accountability system	Conduct a series of webinars concerning performance assessment—why, pitfalls, success strategies								60 schools actively involved in League; 12 from each state
						Practice: scale up the number of schools successfully implementing the learner-centered accountability system	Create teacher education group to review educator needs to implement state accountability framework	Create position paper on key knowledge and skills that educators require for implementation	Meet with key teacher education leaders across the state to explore changes in teacher preparation programs	Coordinate a seminar series on assessment and accountability for department staff						Each SEA has organized staff to provide support to League schools within their state
						Public Will: change public and political perception in support of learner-centered accountability among school board members, education leaders, and business leaders.	Have commissioner and field reps meet with editorial board from key state newspapers	Put NESSC College Readiness metric on DOE website	Conduct crosswalk on the business profiles of Business Roundtable members and goals, metrics, and objectives of DOE and NESSC; share results with members							Media reports in each state focus on assistance provided to underperforming schools Messaging & brochures from each community or business advocacy organization mirror NESSC The NESSC metrics are publicly available on each SEA website The NESSC metric on college readiness is posted on each SEA website

		SAMPLE State Action Steps				SY 2013 Outcome
Strategy		Host 4 in-state Council meetings	Participate in Commissioner's meetings	Collaborate with GSP in one-on-one meetings with Council members		
Organizational Sustainability	Get active support from the members of the NESSC Council and leadership teams regarding NESSC strategies and goals within their spheres of influence					Commissioner's meetings prior to each council meeting averaged 80% attendance of commissioners All Council meetings had representation from each state beyond SEA staff
	Identify state and federal funding sources that could be shifted to support NESSC activities	Put NESSC funding into state budget; get approval	Review Title 1 and Perkins funds to identify available funding to support grants to League schools			Each state provided through federal and state resources \$25,000 to support the NESSC and participation of schools in the League of Innovative Schools
	Establish relationships with local and national funders to align their areas of interest with specific needs of the Consortium	Collaborate with GSP to host a state foundation meeting; explore collaboration with state community foundation to support this				At least one local foundation from each state provided financial support for the NESSC NESSC is supported financially by at least two national foundations.

SECTION VII: ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

During the start-up phase of the Consortium, several key operational stances were developed that have enabled the NESSC to continue despite turnover in key champions. At its core, the NESSC exists to support states in realizing their intentions concerning the redesign of secondary schools. Each state comes to this effort willingly with the intention to contribute to the success of other states and deepen understanding and student learning collaboratively. The NESSC is not a political entity and has no authority over the states. Similarly, no state has authority over another state. The NESSC is a commitment of collaboration and contributions, not politics and power.

The NESSC is a state-led initiative overseen by the NESSC Council consisting of the commissioners of education from each state leading a team selected and endorsed by each commissioner, and representatives from the New England Board of Higher Education and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Each state team includes key legislators, state board members, SEA staff, governors' representatives, higher education, and business leaders. These people represent, collectively, a force of leadership, capacity, expertise, and political influence that is rarely marshaled in pursuit a common set of goals and actions. Annually, the Council holds three in-person meetings, three videoconference meetings, and six in-state meetings and/or teleconferences. Council members play the crucial role of setting the overall direction and priorities for the NESSC, sharing ideas and support across state lines, and spreading the ideas and intentions of the NESSC within their spheres of influence. The Council has two officers—a chair and vice chair—who provide immediate response to NESSC needs if full Council participation is not possible for a time-sensitive issue. These positions are approved by the Council membership on an annual basis for a one year term, although officers can be reapproved by the Council. The chair is a commissioner of education; the vice chair can be filled by any member of the Council. The chair will open and close all Council meetings; in her/his absence, this role will be filled by the vice chair.

Each state commissioner has assigned key staff as **SEA Leads**. The SEA Leads meet at least six times each year, with frequent communication in between meetings to keep Leads apprised of ongoing NESSC work and initiatives in other member states. Following the direction set by the Council and chiefs, the Leads coordinate in-state responses and activities, cross-state NESSC partnerships, and oversight of NESSC strategic action teams and their resulting implementation plans. Critically, these state education leaders also make sure that the NESSC goals, values, and strategies are integrated into the work of the SEAs and enacted in both policy and practice at the state level.

Work takes place through **Strategic Action Teams** aligned with the NESSC Objectives, alternating between in-person and teleconference meetings. These groups communicate both formally and informally, and the NESSC leadership take steps to ensure that all groups remain apprised of the work, progress, and accomplishments of the other Strategic Action Teams. The following individuals/roles will be involved in the NESSC's Strategic Action Teams:

Policy Strategic Action Team: Commissioners of education; deputy commissioners; SEA Leads; state board members; education policy advisors to the governors, legislators, and NESSC Council members. This team has primary responsibility for developing and coordinating NESSC policy work.

League of Innovative Schools Strategic Action Team: SEA staff overseeing school-improvement programs; other relevant SEA staff; and educators from the field. This team has primary responsibility for developing and coordinating the League of Innovative Schools.

Data Systems Strategic Action Team: SEA data coordinators, university data-system coordinators; and regional data experts. This team has primary responsibility for coordinating data collection and implementation, sharing data with other states, aligning NESSC data collection with federal requirements, and developing additional metrics for future adoption by the NESSC and participating states.

Messaging Strategic Action Team: SEA communication directors; other appropriate communication directors (such as those from Nellie Mae Education Foundation, for example); and other partners and consultants as needed. This team has primary responsibility for developing and implementing messaging and communication strategies to support of the public and political will.

State Implementation Team: State leads, SEA staff connected with secondary schools, state liaison. As needed, commissioners and deputy commissioners are directly involved in the state implementation team. This team coordinates in-state activities aligned with NESSC activities. Specifically, each state team works with their lead and liaison to create a state-level implementation plan for NESSC strategies.

For the duration of this strategic plan, the Great Schools Partnership will serve as the fiscal agent and coordinating entity for the member states of the NESSC. A staff member of the GSP will serve as the Coordinating Director for the NESSC. The Great Schools Partnership is responsible for coordinating activities of the NESSC including implementation of the NESSC Strategic Plan, grant administration, logistical coordination, strategic planning, group facilitation, school-change expertise, and constructive feedback. Staffing will be implemented as funding allows.