



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN IN ACTION

APRIL 8-9, 2010

NASHUA, NH



USING GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN CONTEXT IN YOUR SCHOOL

PRESENTERS

BARBARA MILLER

Rhode Island State Liaison

MARK KOSTIN

Maine State Liaison

AGENDA

1. Welcome, Introductions, Overview
2. **ACTIVITY 1**: Professional Learning Communities
3. Overview of Global Best Practices in Context
4. **ACTIVITY 2**: Engage with the Tool
5. Implications, Next Steps, Feedback

ACTIVITY 1: Professional Learning Communities

What are the characteristics of effective professional learning communities in high-performing secondary schools?

Compare and contrast your responses to the Professional Learning Communities section in Global Best Practices in Context

Why We Created This Tool

- ✓ Promote a global perspective in New England secondary schools.
- ✓ Translate international best practices for an American audience and context.
- ✓ Distill hard-to-find research and make it accessible to the busy educator.
- ✓ Help schools assess their relative performance in critical areas of school practice.
- ✓ Provide a practical, step-by-step process that can be used to shape school-improvement plans.

Things to Keep in Mind

- ✓ The tool is an unfinished working draft
- ✓ It is not a research report, but a practical tool for practitioners that distills selected best practices
- ✓ The descriptions and strategies are still being vetted by researchers and experts
- ✓ The tool is focused on extracting relevant lessons that can inform school-improvement work, not on promoting specific international strategies that may or may not have direct application in the United States.
- ✓ Your suggestions for improvement are welcomed

STRANDS + DIMENSIONS

Global Best Practices in Context is organized into three sections, each with its own subsections. The three “strands” below identify broad areas that every school community should address, while the numbered “dimensions” are intended to guide in-depth investigations into specific issues.

Teaching + Learning

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

Organizational Design

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

School Leadership

- 2.1 Teacher Recruitment + Retention
- 2.2 Administrative Leadership
- 2.3 Shared Leadership
- 2.4 Moral Courage

STEP 1: READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTION

INITIATING 1

Some teachers rely on outdated textbooks and learning materials that tend to espouse a Eurocentric point of view and offers only traditional instruction in a few European languages, and there are no alternative options for students interested in learning other world languages. History and social science courses focus primarily on the American experience and do not address the emerging global interconnectedness of societies and cultures. English-language learners spend most of the day in English classes, and students, parents, and community members from other countries are rarely invited to share their backgrounds and experiences with students. The school's vision and mission do not address international learning or multicultural education. Students and teachers have reported incidences of racial, ethnic, and religious slurs being used during or outside of school.

DEVELOPING 3

School leaders and teachers have recognized the importance of exposing students to global issues and perspectives. The school's action plan outlines several specific objectives for expanding international-learning opportunities for students. The school offers programs designed to increase multicultural understanding among staff and students, but these opportunities are often elective, offered after normal school hours, or unconnected to curriculum and instruction. Immigrant families, students, and leaders of local cultural institutions are occasionally invited to present their experiences in classes. The school makes efforts to recognize and honor the cultural diversity of their students, and lessons are often modified to include references to the diverse social and cultural backgrounds represented in the class. Students are increasingly participating in international programs, travel-abroad opportunities, volunteerism, internships, leadership programs, and other opportunities that expose them to different societies and cultures. The school has added new world-language courses and is working to forge partnerships with regional high schools and local colleges to increase learning opportunities in world languages.

PERFORMING 5

Enhancing global literacy—student understanding of international issues and world cultures—is not only an explicit goal of the school, but school leaders and staff have made a concerted effort to incorporate international knowledge, perspectives, and global values into all programs and learning opportunities. International issues and perspectives are emphasized in all content areas and are embedded in curriculum, syllabi, instruction, and learning materials, particularly in world history, anthropology, literature, art, culture, economics, politics, and current events. Students have access to a variety of learning options and experiences, including distance-learning courses, collegiate courses, language-learning software, programs, and virtual courses and exchange opportunities. Humanities, history, and social studies lessons go beyond “fun, food, and festivals” to explore the global interconnectedness and interdependence of societies, cultures, and communities. Interdisciplinary, theme-based lessons investigate global cultures in depth and integrate skills from across the curriculum, including writing, research skills, scientific methods, and mathematics. Learning opportunities designed to foster a greater understanding of diverse cultures and belief systems are built into the school day and co-curricular programs.

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School leaders and teachers have recognized the importance of exposing students to global issues and perspectives. The school's action plan outlines several specific objectives for expanding international-learning opportunities for all students. The school offers programs designed to increase multicultural understanding among staff and students, but these opportunities are often elective, offered after normal school hours, or unconnected to curriculum and instruction. Immigrant families, students, and leaders of local cultural institutions are occasionally invited to present their experiences in classes. The school makes efforts to recognize and honor the cultural diversity of their students, and lessons are often modified to include references to the diverse social and cultural backgrounds represented in the class. Students are increasingly participating in international programs, travel-abroad opportunities, volunteerism, internships, leadership programs, and other opportunities that expose them to different societies and cultures. The school has added new world-language courses and is working to forge partnerships with regional high schools and local colleges to increase learning opportunities in world languages.

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STEP 2: RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

SAMPLE PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

- The number of students enrolling in and passing Advanced Placement World Language courses has increased.
- The engagement, performance, and co-curricular participation of the school's English-language learners has increased, and participation in school activities among immigrant or minority families has also increased.
- Student participation in world-language courses, student-exchange programs, study-abroad programs, and other international-oriented educational programs has increased.
- There is no evidence of student violence, bullying, or behavioral issues stemming from racial or ethnic differences among students.

OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION

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Area for recording evidence in this dimension.

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STEP 3: RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

SAMPLE HIGH-PERFORMING STRATEGIES

- Increase world-language course offerings, and coordinate with other schools, college, or cultural institutions in the world-language educators and resources, and to provide online and distance-learning courses in languages—such as Japanese, Russian, German, Hebrew, or Arabic—for which a full-time hire may be impractical or infeasible.
- Coordinate with sending middle schools to begin offering aligned world-language courses and instruction so that incoming students can continue their study.
- Build a thematic, interdisciplinary world-language curriculum that integrates language skills, cultural understanding, and history.
- Emphasize challenging issues with global ramifications in science courses, including climate change, biodiversity and fisheries depletion, deforestation, and food and water shortages.
- Adopt an international-studies graduation policy that requires all students to complete at least a one-year global-studies yearlong capstone project on a global issue.
- Make use of visiting lecturers, service-learning projects, sister-school programs, student and faculty exchange programs, and exchange programs to expose students to different cultures, increase multicultural understanding among students, and enrich curriculum and instruction.
- Recognize culturally important themes and events, particularly those that reflect the diversity of the student body.
- Ensure that courses and co-curricular programs address problems and challenges that result from racism, discrimination, conflict, and religious intolerance.
- Have the school cafeteria, in collaboration with student families and local cultural institutions, regularly offer a selection of international foods.
- Provide translation services for students and parents who have low-levels of English-language proficiency.
- Utilize the Internet not only to conduct research, but also to connect students—using online video streaming, chat, and networking sites—directly to their peers in other countries through cultural exchange experiences and collaborative learning.

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STEP 4: SCORE YOUR SCHOOL



SCORING + PRIORITIZING

Once your school has completed the self-assessment, fill in the scores for each dimension below. The completed table will offer a visual overview of potential school-improvement priorities.

	LOWER PRIORITY	—————→			HIGH PRIORITY
	5	4	3	2	1
Teaching + Learning					
1.1 Equity					
1.2 Personalization + Relevance					
1.3 Academic Rigor					
1.4 Standards-Based Education					
1.5 Assessment Practices					
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Next Steps for the Tool

- ✓ Complete background research and vet the tool's descriptions and strategies.
- ✓ Incorporate feedback from experts and educators.
- ✓ Create additional tools to help schools turn their self-assessment into a practical improvement plan.
- ✓ Finalize document by September 1, 2010.
- ✓ Publicize and distribute the tool.
- ✓ Begin using with schools across New England during Phase II of the NESSC.
- ✓ Create a companion tool for educational systems.

ACTIVITY 2: Test Drive the Tool

1. Individually or with a colleague complete STEPS 1-4 for one assigned dimension and a dimension of your choice
2. Develop a set of actions steps for your school to enhance its work in the two dimensions
3. Share one specific action your school might take as a result of your reflections



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

For more information:

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207-773-0505

newenglandssc.org