



Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

NextGen Systems Initiative Proposal

New England Secondary School Consortium

Personalizing Learning on a Regional Scale

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Submitted by

Great Schools Partnership

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The Proposal Narrative, complete set of appendices, and Personalizing Learning web resources are available at: greatschoolspartnership.org/gates-next-gen-systems-initiative-proposal/

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Executive Summary

Working in collaboration with state education agencies, the Great Schools Partnership (GSP) created the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) in 2008 to change the educational systems in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The NESSC is a unique state and non-profit regional partnership that works to close persistent achievement gaps, strengthen college and career readiness, and promote greater educational equity and opportunity for all students. Funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will be used to ensure all learning is personalized and to deepen and expand the work of schools involved in the NESSC's League of Innovative Schools.

The objectives of the NESSC align closely with the intentions of the Gates Foundation to personalize education. We believe that personalizing education rests on three key strategies: (1) proficiency-based graduation, (2) multiple and flexible pathways, and (3) the development of learner-centered accountability that measures results both in terms of students and implementation. The simultaneous implementation of these three strategies ensures that student learning will be academically challenging and equitable and results in preparing all students for college, careers, and thoughtful citizenship.

The NESSC rests on the systemic theory of action that ambitious educational goals will only be met if policy, practice, and public will are addressed simultaneously. Historically, reform efforts have focused on either changing policy or practice. Few have focused on changing public perceptions. Very few efforts have actively worked on all three areas. When only the lever of policy is used to promote systemic change, without buy-in from educators and the public, schools are extremely adept at sidestepping a policy's intent; they may comply, but only temporarily and with no intention of implementing systemic change. At the same time, districts and schools that have embraced personalization and innovation, and that may even have made significant progress in changing their systems, find themselves as outliers, often operating outside of existing policies. Only by engaging parents, community members, and business leaders, can we develop the political and public will required to stimulate, drive, and sustain innovative change over the multiple years required to produce measureable, observable results.

By bringing together the priorities of policy makers, the hopes of the public, and the beliefs, goals, and strategies of practitioners, the NESSC has created the conditions for resources, incentives, and state pressure to complement the work of New England's educators.

Organizationally, the NESSC has gathered chief state school officers, governors' staff, legislators, state board members, higher education faculty, K-12 educators, and business leaders from each state to create the NESSC's Council and influence actions across the region. The NESSC has had significant policy success. Four states have state graduation policies that require students to demonstrate achievement of college and career-ready standards in order to graduate. The fifth has passed legislation that provides schools with that option. Time is no longer the determinant; rather, it is a variable to the requirement of

demonstrated learning. In addition, every state has policy that promotes the development of multiple pathways including the recognition of learning acquired outside of school.

While these bold state policies are an important first step, parallel changes in daily practice have lagged. To address this, the NESSC started the League of Innovative Schools, a growing coalition of 75 secondary schools throughout New England that has chosen to come together as a regional professional learning community. These schools have committed to deepening personalization for all students through the implementation of proficiency-based graduation while providing students with multiple, personalized pathways to high school graduation.

The League is a true coalition of the willing. Each school joined voluntarily, none have received grant funding through the NESSC to support their work, and all members have made an ambitious commitment to personalized learning and systemic improvement, documented by a formal agreement signed by the superintendent, school-board chair, principal, teacher-leaders, and student and parent representatives.

Investment from the Next Gen Systems Initiative will enable GSP to provide technical assistance to each League school using three strategies: (1) for a smaller subset of 10-15 League schools, intensive, on-site school coaching provided by an experienced professional to facilitate planning, implementation, evaluation, and self-accountability; (2) for all League schools, a comprehensive system of specialized resources regarding personalized-learning systems and expanding learning pathways; and (3) again for all League schools, online and person-to-person professional development through conferences, webinars, training sessions, and school visits. When necessary and strategically advantageous, the subset of grantee schools with free-and-reduced-lunch rates of 40 percent or higher will receive targeted, but limited, funding to subsidize high-need, high-leverage investments.

We will select the subset of schools through a multistep process outlining a rigorous set of development standards and a mandatory series of self-assessment and early implementation activities. Similar to the personalized learning strategies schools will implement for students, schools will work toward the demonstration of activities that meet a set of standards rather than compete against one another.

While we anticipate that full League membership will continue to grow and will enable us to influence all 480 secondary schools in our five states, our scale-up and sustainability strategy returns to our theory of action. The initial subset of schools will begin sharing their efforts with other League schools immediately—not as an emulation model, but as a collaborative learning model. Simultaneously, we will be disseminating this work to influence further state and district policy development as well as the understanding of the general public. Again, only by working concurrently on these three levers of our work can we expect to expand and sustain these efforts.

Personalizing learning is not a new concept; we could argue John Dewey initiated this line of thinking. We could also argue that examples of schools that do this well exist in various pockets of innovation across the country. And yet, scaling up this promising work has remained elusive even as it has been one of the most sought-after goals identified by policy makers, education reformers, and major philanthropies in the United States. We believe that the NESSC and League of Innovative Schools represent a breakthrough in this quest, achieving a level of technical assistance, political will, and public support that has established an unparalleled foundation for the systemic personalization of public education on a regional scale.

Section I – Context

The League of Innovative Schools is a coalition of the willing – 75 schools across five New England states that have committed to the implementation of personalized learning, to collaboration and professional development through a network of supportive colleagues, and to serving as exemplars across the region and the country. This collaboration is an outgrowth of five years of effort from the New England Secondary School Consortium, a joint effort of the state education agencies of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont to personalize learning for all students through the levers of policy, practice and public will. NESSC and Great Schools Partnership, the organization committed to executing that work, laid the foundations by changing the policy landscape and creating support for personalized learning among leaders of all political parties; through direct coaching, professional development and tool creation for schools; and through direct outreach to, and education for, communities across New England.

The NESSC has seen significant success at the state policy level, making arguably the most dynamic changes seen by any states across the country. Students receiving diplomas in ME, NH, RI and VT are now required to demonstrate learning—seat time, minimum passing grades, and isolated credits are no longer enough to grant a diploma. CT has adopted enabling policy and, importantly, is engaged in strategic planning to expand opportunities for schools. The five SEAs have also refined and created new policies that either require or encourage schools to offer multiple pathways to graduation—whether it’s dual-enrollment and online courses or internships and student-designed projects—that are not just forms of extra credit or enrichment, but that allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning standards and satisfy graduation requirements.

We have also been successful in creating increased public, political, and educator will. GSP created the Glossary of Education Reform (edglossary.org)—a comprehensive online resource that describes widely used school-improvement terms, concepts, and strategies for journalists, parents, and community members—and launched the Leadership in Action briefing series (newenglandssc.org/Leadership_In_Action), which is sent to nearly 8,000 recipients across New England, including all the district school board members, legislators, state board of education members, superintendents, and principals in the five NESSC states. Each year, the NESSC draws between 500 and 600 policy makers and secondary educators to its annual High School Redesign in Action conference (newenglandssc.org/conference), where schools from across the region share their success, challenges, and innovations with their New England colleagues. The NESSC also secured signed endorsements of proficiency-based learning from 48 collegiate institutions in New England, including all the public universities and colleges in each state (<http://newenglandssc.org/resources/endorsements>).

NESSC state education agencies are implementing organizational changes long discussed by many but seldom seen. The five commissioners interact consistently and have engaged state legislators, governor’s representatives, higher education officials, and business leaders

New England Secondary School Consortium Council

Commissioners of education, deputy commissioners of education, SEA leads, state legislators, state board members, governors' representatives, business leaders, Great Schools Partnership, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, New England Board of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges

RESPONSIBILITIES Overall leadership, advocacy, and support for all NESSC activities



Figure 1. NESSC Leadership Structure

both within their states and across state boundaries to support the ends of the NESSC. These leaders comprise the NESSC Council. Further, each SEA has created internal implementation teams that coordinate and align efforts connected with NESSC. Each of these teams is coordinated by a state lead who in turn meets regularly as part of the NESSC Leads team. The SEAs have created a unique organizational design that collaborates while maintaining state autonomy—despite significant commissioner and SEA leadership turnover in all five states, major political shifts and upheavals, and evolving governmental and departmental priorities.

In addition to serving as the lead coordinator of the NESSC, the Great Schools Partnership brings years of experience in school coaching, resource development, and systemic school improvement. Founded six years ago, GSP has provided intensive school coaching to more than 45 schools in New England, delivered technical assistance to more than 160 schools across the country, and trained hundreds of educators in professional learning community

design, facilitation, and implementation. GSP has been a technical-service provider to two national U.S. Department of Education school-improvement programs—the High School Graduation Initiative and the Smaller Learning Communities Program.

In sum, the NESSC has created a foundational context unparalleled in the country that provides state level policy support, has generated a positive interest among the broader public, and has attracted a strong cadre of schools committed to personalizing learning—while simultaneously establishing a support structure led by GSP that will ensure both depth of implementation and sustainability of effort.

Section II—Project Goals

The NESSC has established three goals for our work: (1) a five-year graduation rate of 90% or higher; (2) a post-secondary learning enrollment rate of 80% or higher; and (3) a reduced dropout rate of 5% or lower. As evidence of this commitment, a regional data team—comprising senior SEA leaders, collegiate representatives, and data experts—has developed a set of common, co-developed metrics for high school performance that are calculated and reported consistently for all five states. Each grantee school and League member impacted by this project will adopt the same performance goals endorsed and promoted by the NESSC, and achievement of those goals will be consistently tracked, measured, and evaluated on local, state, and regional levels. The NESSC’s Common Data Project (newenglandssc.org/resources/data) Procedural Guidebook provides a detailed description of the NESSC’s metrics, protocols, and quality controls.

Schools selected to receive intensive support through this proposal will be expected to meet individually-established student attainment goals determined by a common growth rate. This process enables us to acknowledge that different schools start at different points of success, but that we expect similar rates of growth. Each school will be expected to realize a 5% annual decrease in the percentage of students who do not meet each metric by June of 2015 and 2016, followed by a 10% decrease annually in years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. This formula leads to a relatively slower rate of improvement at the start (a reality based on the fact that many students are already in the system), followed by more aggressive change as students’ personalized learning experiences increase.

This process enables us to set achievable and personalized targets for each school. In addition, the similar growth percentages expect larger percentage point growth for schools further from our success targets. It also works to narrow the achievement gaps at a greater percentage point rate than the overall percentage point growth.

The following formula is used to determine individual school targets:

$$((1 - \text{original success percentage}) \times \text{percent decrease}) + \text{original success percentage}$$

For example, if a school has a five-year cohort graduation rate of 60% for students eligible for free and reduced lunch, the percentage of students not graduating from that cohort is 40%. Reducing the percentage of students not graduating by 5% the next year would decrease this figure by 2 percentage points. Adding 2 percentage points to the original 60% would provide a target of 62%. If this same school had an overall 80% five-year graduation rate, the percentage of students not graduating would be 20%. Reducing this percentage by 5% would be 1 percentage point. Adding this to the original 80% would establish a target of 81%. In both cases, the growth percentage is the same, but the percentage point gains are different. Each individual target is fair while at the same time decreasing the achievement gap.

The following table provides growth rates for a sample school looking at five-year graduation rates:

Table 1. Sample High School Graduation Rate Targets

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall	85.0	85.0	85.8	86.5	87.8	89.0	90.1	90.6
Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch	65.0	65.0	66.8	68.4	71.6	74.4	77.0	78.1

**based on 5% fewer students not graduating every year beginning with the class of 2015 then 10% fewer for the class of 2017 & beyond*

In this example, the overall graduation rate has growth by 5.6 percentage points while the growth rate for students of lower socioeconomic means has grown by 13.1 percentage points. Importantly, the achievement gap has been reduced from 20 percentage points to 12.5 percentage points.

Unique student attainment goals for five-year graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and dropout rates will be established for each school. These will be developed for all students as well as for students eligible for free and reduced lunch.



Section III – Project Vision

The New England Secondary School Consortium’s vision is to ensure college and career readiness for all students in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont through personalized learning built on proficiency-based graduation, multiple and flexible pathways, and learner-centered accountability systems.

The fundamental vision driving this project is as simple as it is revolutionary: We will not only enable all students to achieve the learning required for college and career success, but we will also make sure that they have learned it. Essentially, preparing students for their lives requires us to personalize learning by implementing proficiency-based graduation, multiple and flexible

pathways, and learner-centered accountability systems. In our current system, students “pass” courses with As and with Ds, they “earn” diplomas that do not represent or certify readiness for college and careers, and they receive instruction that may not only be highly uneven in its quality or consistency, but that may also not even address the most essential knowledge, skills, and habits of work students will need to succeed in today’s world. In fact, our public high schools continue to award diplomas each year despite the fact that many of them cannot articulate or verify what their graduates have specifically learned or failed to learn—the sobering reality is that many high schools simply don’t know what their graduates have achieved or are capable of doing. As a primary driver of personalized learning, proficiency-based instruction, assessment, reporting, and graduation decisions are the foundation that will empower New England’s schools to develop more flexible and innovative approaches to learning.

In the traditional comprehensive high school, students are locked into specific course sequences, credit requirements, and learning environments, which inevitably impose limitations on a school’s ability to personalize instruction, learning, and support. Proficiency-based learning, when implemented effectively, untethers the learning process from these restrictive conditions, allowing students to learn in different ways, in different settings, and with different instructors, mentors, or specialists. Only when schools are focused on the achievement of the most critical learning expectations, rather than on the maintenance of legacy systems and traditional practices, can true personalization take hold. In a proficiency-based system, any learning experience—whether it’s a traditional, online, dual-enrollment, blended, or flipped course, or whether it’s an internship, independent project, or service-learning experience—can become the pathway students take to meeting the expected standards and graduating college- and-career ready.

Proficiency-based graduation and flexible pathways make great sense. Unfortunately, we are layering these ideas on top of flawed accountability systems that fail to provide high schools with information regarding the full breadth of what their students have actually learned or are capable of achieving. In addition, we fail to provide vital and timely information on how educators could change the current system to improve learning. Learner-centered accountability measures both student achievement and the instructional and organizational practices employed by the school to support student learning. While the implementation of proficiency-based learning will provide significantly richer student achievement measures, it fails to provide the rich information that explains why schools are realizing the student learning results they have. Schools must collect data on such things as instructional practice, curriculum alignment, and student participation in external learning opportunities to determine the effectiveness of various approaches to enhance and to ensure the achievement we seek. Without this second step, schools may understand what students know and are able to do, but they will have very little indication about how to enhance and improve this learning. The implementation of proficiency-based graduation and multiple pathways provides the opportunity for personalized, equitable, and deep learning; a learner-centered accountability system ensures integrity across the learning system—measuring, understanding, and improving both student learning and instructional and organizational practices that support and ensure this achievement.

A Proven Theory of Action

To impact the education system, not just individual schools and districts, the NESSC’s threefold theory of action simultaneously addresses policy, practice, and public will. Historically, many reform initiatives have focused on changing either policy or practice, and a few attempted to tackle public perceptions, typically through high-profile campaigns or grassroots advocacy. Very few—if any—have actively addressed all three of these critical leverage points at scale across a region. What the NESSC theory of action recognizes is that policies either incentivize or discourage behaviors—and for busy educators burdened with compliance requirements, the policies that don’t incentivize typically discourage. In many schools, improvement gets addressed only after everyone has finished what they are expected to accomplish. If policy requires students to earn 24 school- and time-based credits to graduate, learning becomes 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. If district or state policy does not endorse or support alternative pathways to graduation, schools are hampered in their ability to use their communities as a classroom.

The three elements of policy, practice, and public will impact one another, 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. This quagmire is further muddied by a general lack of understanding and commitment by parents and community members. Rather than operating in isolation, the NESSC theory of action requires the simultaneous change of practice, policy and public will. The NESSC intends to—as it has over the past five years—simultaneously create effective pressure and support through on-the-ground support for practice within schools, district and state policy change, and public understanding and commitment.



Figure 2. NESSC Theory of Action

Over the past two decades, a significant body of research has revealed what works in schools: excellent instruction in every classroom, every day, reinforced by high expectations for every student. Research also provides strong evidence that the most effective, cost-efficient, and sustainable strategy for improving instructional quality is an educator-driven professional learning community. When educators talk to each other, when they share what works and what doesn't, and when they build strong professional relationships that motivate and inspire, instruction improves, student performance rises, and schools become better places to work and learn. Designed to promote school-to-school and educator-to-educator collaboration, professional support, and best-practice exchange across state lines, the NESSC's League of Innovative Schools is built on a simple but powerful premise: the scale-up of success depends upon the thoughtful exchange of ideas, not a robotic emulation of the work of others. The League harnesses social and professional connections, interactions, and relationships to drive change by influencing the culture, values, and leadership of schools, and the beliefs, values, and practices of its educators.

Table 2. GBP Dimensions Aligned to BMGF's Pillars of Personalized Learning

	Definition	Global Best Practice
Learner Profiles	Captures individual skills, gaps, strengths, weaknesses, interests and aspirations of each student	1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7
Personalized Learning Plans	Each student has learning goals & objectives. Learning experiences are diverse and matched to the individual needs of students	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6
Individual Mastery	Continually assesses student progress against clearly defined standards & goals. Students advance based on demonstrated mastery	1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 2.6
Flexible Environments	Multiple instructional delivery approaches that continuously optimize available resources in support of student learning	1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.3

**Additional GBP dimensions provide a strong, systemic foundation for personalized learning*

Defining Personalized Learning

Following a study of international research regarding the best schools and practices from around the world, the NESSC developed *Global Best Practices: An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning*. The tool and step-by-step self-assessment process has been used by more than a hundred schools to date, including all 75 schools in the League. While “personalized learning” is often discussed in the abstract, the NESSC recognizes that schools need more than vaguely defined principles and strategies—they need concrete guidance that will help them determine what they are doing well and what they need to change, and that will help them create a practical, step-by-step plan that will move them from where they are to where they want to be. *Global Best Practices* was developed for this very purpose, and it outlines—in detail—the major components of an effective personalized-learning system. The tool is organized into three major sections (strands)—Teaching and Learning, Organizational Design, and Schools Leadership—and 20 subsections (dimensions) that each describe a school in three distinct stages of change: Initiating, Developing, and Performing. *Global Best Practices* does not just define the end goal, but it describes the transformational process that schools typically follow as they work to get there.

Global Best Practices not only provides a comprehensive, researched-based definition of a personalized school, but it is clearly aligned with the Gates Foundation’s Four Pillars of Personalized Learning: learner profiles, personalized learning plans, individual mastery, and flexible learning environments (see Table 2). But *Global Best Practices* also addresses the necessary preconditions that, in more traditionally structured schools, must be in place for personalized learning to take hold: bold leadership, strong professional development, a robust faculty pipeline, and the moral courage needed to change, and keep changing, even in the face of internal or external opposition and criticism.

As schools begin their journey to implement personalized learning, they will use the full complement of *Global Best Practices* to diagnose where they are today. This will clearly identify areas of effort for the school that will result in increased personalization for students. It also serves as an ideology roadmap, identifying components of successful implementation. Finally, it serves as the initial review of support needs for each school, creating a personalized professional development plan for the educators in the school.

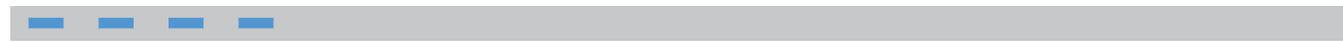
Scalability

To support all schools in New England in realizing this vision, NESSC will first focus on the schools in the League of Innovative Schools: these schools have voluntarily committed to collaborate with each other, to implement personalized learning, and to serve as exemplars in meeting the needs of all students. Beginning with two smaller cohorts of 10-15 schools each (as identified through a selection process detailed in Section VI), GSP will provide robust coaching and support to ensure the full implementation of personalized learning. While intensive support will be extended to a relatively small number of schools, the entire network will receive ongoing professional development, customized resources, and opportunities for expertise exchange and school visits. Our five-state network already represents 16 percent of the publicly funded secondary schools in the five NESSC states, and as the coalition grows

in size, scope, and influence, its achievements and impact have the potential to improve the culture, practices, and results of hundreds of schools and thousands of educators—and by extension reshape public education in New England, reaching all 480 high schools in the five states.

The League is a true coalition of the willing: each school joined voluntarily, most receive no funding through the NESSC to support their work, and all members have made an ambitious commitment to personalized learning and systemic improvement, documented by a formal agreement signed by the superintendent, school-board chair, principal, teacher-leaders, and student and parent representatives. Importantly, the League is designed intentionally to be a self-sustaining regional learning community that will not be dependent long-term on significant outside investments to produce meaningful results.

The League’s scale-up model is not based on emulation—a common approach—but rather school-to-school networking. If exemplars and emulation were all that are required, the American education system would look much different than it does today—there are numerous examples of successful reform and high-performing schools throughout the country. We don’t just need examples of what schools should look like; we also need to teach schools how to get there. As the first cohort of schools accelerates their implementation of personalized learning, the other League members will serve as critical friends, both learning from and supporting the intensive-support schools. The League will support the process, not just promote the products. Like an exemplar assignment or paper that a teacher uses to show students what quality work looks like, the League will demonstrate how successful change can be implemented, while also providing schools with the support they need to do it themselves. And with the foundation of the League already in place, and a cohort of schools prepare to take the next step, implementation will begin immediately—not two years down the road—accelerating the influence they can have on their peers.



Section IV – What Strengths Can Help Us Face Our Barriers?

Over the past five years, the NESSC has facilitated ongoing dialogue between policy makers and practitioners, and we have collected detailed feedback from policy makers, legislators, school leaders, board members, and business leaders through annual evaluations and multiple focus groups. Consequently, we believe that we have acquired a much clearer understanding of both our strengths and the barriers we face. Building on this, we engaged in an extensive and rigorous set of assessments over the past two months to better inform this work: (1) a self-scoring on the *Global Best Practices*, completed in most cases by a full leadership team with teacher input; (2) an evaluation of current IT capabilities and infrastructure; and (3) a documentation of perceived barriers to implementing personalized learning, along dimensions such as credit and assessment policy, community support, and funding. In addition, all five state departments of education provided data on student performance and college readiness. All of this has allowed us to better understand the gaps between each school’s current state

and a fully personalized learning environment, in order to create plans that will best support League schools as they plan to implement.

While there are differences between schools and states (which we will be able to use to differentiate direct support for schools), there are an amazing number of similarities that outline areas of strength and concern. These are listed below.

Areas of Strength

- **Favorable Policy Environment.** Over the past five years, the NESSC states have passed state level policy that endorses and supports personalized learning through either requiring (Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) or enabling (Connecticut) proficiency-based graduation and the implementation of flexible learning pathways and student learning plans (see Appendix I). In addition, state policies that could have been detrimental to this effort have been largely removed. This effort has occurred in an environment that includes both sides of the political aisle, gaining support that has increased the likelihood of sustainability.
- **Committed School Leadership.** Across the NESSC states, an increasing number of school leaders—from superintendents, school-board members, and principals to the leaders of professional organizations—are actively and visibly expressing their support for personalized approaches to schooling, proficiency-based learning, multiple pathways to graduation, and aligned initiatives and policies such as the Common Core State Standards, personal learning plans, capstone projects, and more authentic demonstrations of learning. As this momentum builds, and the educational cultures in states shift, we are seeing more districts and schools looking to the NESSC for leadership, support, and resources. As noted, each League member has made a formal commitment to the core objectives of this proposal. In addition, most of the League schools have a leadership team in place and an operational action plan, have completed a *Global Best Practices* self-assessment, have visited other schools in the network, and have participated in the NESSC’s annual conference and ongoing professional-development opportunities.
- **State Leaders and Champions.** The NESSC Council will be a major source of support for this project. Comprising chief state school officers, deputy commissioners, senior SEA staff, legislative leaders from both sides of the aisle, state board members, higher education leaders, governor’s-office representatives, and other regional, state, and district leaders, the Council has proven instrumental to the NESSC since its inception. Not only are Council members willing to speak publicly in support of the NESSC’s agenda, goals, and strategies—after all, these ideas align with the priorities of their states—they work actively on behalf of the NESSC within their spheres of influence.
- **Alignment of Support.** In each state, the resources, support, and expertise provided by SEAs, fellow League schools, and nonprofit organizations have increasingly become focused on the same core personalization strategies espoused by the NESSC. The conception of “school reform” is narrowing: college readiness, proficiency-based learning, personalized pathways, learner-centered accountability, the Common Core

State Standards—these strategies have emerged as the dominant school-improvement priorities in New England. While our understaffed and underfunded SEAs still struggle to provide the level of direct support to schools that they would ideally like to provide, their programs, policies, and resources have become more coordinated, prioritized, and focused both within and across state lines. Counting only the League members and the schools that have received school-coaching support from the Great Schools Partnership over three years, we can attest that—at a minimum—well over a hundred secondary schools across New England have been actively working to personalize their programs and practices, and all of them have shared their work and strategies with other schools.

- **Common measures of performance.** Recognizing the critical importance of reliable and comparable data, the NESSC collaboratively developed a set of common metrics for school and student performance that are calculated and reported consistently for all five states. Each grantee school and League member impacted by this project will adopt the same performance goals endorsed and promoted by the NESSC, and achievement of those goals will be consistently tracked, measured, and evaluated on local, state, and regional levels using the same metrics, protocols, and quality controls.
- **Favorable Technology Infrastructure.** While the technology infrastructure in place in districts and schools is still well short of ideal, all five of our states and numerous New England districts have been making investments in school-based technology systems, wireless connectivity and access, and networked devices for students. As the first state to launch a statewide one-to-one program, students in all Maine middle schools and the majority of its high schools have their own dedicated laptops or tablets, and the SEA and outside organizations have been providing educators with supporting professional development for years. The other NESSC states are also accelerating their investments in technology as tablets replace textbooks, paper-and-pencil state tests are phased out, and teachers, students, and parents demand 21st-century learning tools.

Areas of Concern

- **Inadequate professional knowledge and expertise.** Available evidence suggests that, despite progress, school leaders and faculties do not have the capacity, knowledge, expertise, and resources they need to effectively implement personalized systems of learning for all students. While all our League schools have made progress and achieved some demonstrated successes—our annual conference showcases at least fifteen success stories each year—initial steps from partial implementation to high-performing personalized systems will require more sustained capacity-building. School-budget resources available for professional development are limited, and the kind of support schools require to personalize their systems typically exceeds available resource. In addition, it is the rare school that has the internal expertise required to lead a systemic improvement process on its own. While the League schools have made an ambitious commitment, the fulfillment of that commitment will require sustained investments that no single state program, school budget, or grant award will be able to subsidize on its own.

- **Inadequate leadership skills, experience, and depth.** In high-performing personalized systems, different leadership skills are required—traditional top-down administration no longer works. Schools need flatter organizational structures built on shared leadership, shared beliefs, and consistent collaboration. While the majority of our school leaders believe—morally, philosophically, and pedagogically—in student-centered systems, only some of them have the knowledge, experience, credibility, and school-wide leadership depth they need to dramatically reshape the educational experience in their schools. In addition, despite overwhelming evidence that many public schools have not kept pace with the broader changes overtaking every facet of our society—which are increasing the educational needs of our students—many parents and communities still fear, distrust, or misunderstand the changes that schools need to make to prepare students for today’s world. Without sufficient moral courage, which often comes as much from our social, cultural, and professional networks as it does from innate strength, our school leaders may struggle politically to make the fundamental changes that are so urgently needed. We envision the League becoming a greater source confidence, strength, and collective purpose for school leaders who would otherwise have to face these burdens alone.
- **Time constraints and contractual issues.** In many of our League schools, teacher contracts still reflect traditional approaches to schools—they stipulate a specific number of workdays of specific duration or limit the ways in which teachers can support students or participate in professional development. Even though a commitment to “anytime, anywhere learning” is growing in New England, many contractual and labor obstacles remain. For example, teachers may not be willing to take on additional responsibilities outside of those stipulated in their contract, and schools often find it difficult to reduce teaching obligations or rework schedules so that teachers can work more readily and easily with students outside of prescribed times, assume more leadership responsibility, or participate in professional learning groups. Time constraints will remain a significant obstacle for many schools, and one that will need to be addressed to ensure successful implementation.
- **Technology usage and integration gaps.** While many League schools have a solid technology infrastructure and sufficient on-staff capacity, significant inequities exist among states and among schools within a state. And, as might be expected, the inequities tend to mirror socioeconomic disparities. Maine’s technology environment is the most developed, due to its investments in a statewide one-to-one program, but the other states tend to report more unevenness, in terms of both resources/infrastructure and on-staff capacity/expertise—the more significant obstacle. Even in schools with adequate networks, connectivity, and devices, the instructional expertise of teachers lags almost across the board. Essentially, educators and students appear to be using technology in ways that replicate or perpetuate existing practices, albeit with a bit more efficiency. Technology is being used, but it not being used to transform the ways teachers teach and students learn. The League does include strong examples of the transformative application of learning technologies, but the use of technology to drive personalized instruction, support, and pathways will be one of the League’s most significant challenges.
- **Inadequate school-based data infrastructures.** Across the League, only a few schools have built an integrated data infrastructure, one that allows administrators and faculty

to share and analyze data. Both personalization and proficiency-based learning are going to significantly increase the demand for and reliance on student data, including the ability to produce detailed, student-specific reports in a timely fashion. While student information systems have largely replaced traditional grade books, both the systems and the expertise of teachers have not sufficiently evolved to support genuine data-driven instruction and personalization. With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards, and new state policies requiring proficiency-based pathways and diplomas, schools are going to need more sophisticated data systems and strategies that track not only summative grades but progress toward demonstrating mastery of specific standards. In a few cases, League schools have created more advanced data-collection and -analysis systems, but their educators generally lack the expertise needed to implement data-informed approaches to curriculum design, instruction, assessment, reporting, and support. Data use consistently received the lowest scores on the *Global Best Practices* self-assessment.

- **Misaligned spending priorities.** In New England, school budgets are largely determined at the local level and in accordance with local priorities and beliefs. While the public generally supports the idea of “improvement,” school boards and voters are often reticent to reduce or discontinue funding for existing programs and practices, or reallocate funding for new and unfamiliar ideas. While school improvement is desired and encouraged—and in some cases even demanded—funding streams are rarely optimally aligned with these desires to facilitate the implementation of more personalized systems. Consequently, legacy funding models leave schools ill-equipped or lacking the funding and resources they need to invest in talent, technology, professional development, or technical assistance. New England school boards and voters tend to shy away from major funding reallocations of investment in innovation.
- **Lack of public understanding, will, and support.** Despite the work done by the NESSC and aligned advocacy organizations, state and local leaders, and awareness campaigns, major information gaps still exist for New England school boards, parents, business leaders, policy makers, and voters. For example, focus-group studies conducted by the Great Schools Partnership have revealed that the public generally does not have an understanding of concepts such as personalization, student-centered learning, or proficiency-based learning, and that, when asked, they struggle to describe any specific reforms or improvement they believe schools should pursue. In addition, equity-based reforms—whether mixed-ability grouping or proficiency-based grading—tend to be met with criticism or opposition, particularly among those with an interest in perpetuating the status quo, such as the parents of high-achieving students. Exacerbating the situation, the media establishment in New England, following years of revenue decline and newsroom downsizing, rarely has fulltime education reporters on staff; consequently, news stories on education and schools exhibit a tenuous understanding of strategies such as personalization or proficiency-based learning. Misunderstanding and misinformation remain a major obstacle, particularly given the scale of the problem (public understanding across a region) and the limited amount of resources and capacity available to address the issue.

Identifying Improvement Archetypes

During the development of this project, all League members completed comprehensive needs assessment surveys. While individual school results varied both within and across the states, the assessment process identified common strengths and common concerns among League schools. By clustering the results of the *Global Best Practices* review, we found three reoccurring school profiles that represent distinct “archetypes” of schools in transition from traditional to personalized systems (the archetypes were determined using a k-means cluster analysis on the scores from 61 League schools across the 20 *Global Best Practices* dimensions). Tables three and four describe the primary characteristics of three dominant archetypes—the Community-Driven School (26% of League Schools), the Leadership-Driven School (56%), and the Early-Adoption School (18%)—and the corresponding activities and support they will need to successfully implement personalized learning.

Nearly to a school, respondents cited school coaching and technical assistance as their most critical need as they work to personalize their programs and practices. That said, the distinct needs and strengths of each school recommend a differentiated approach to support, technical assistance, and professional development based on the three archetypes described above.

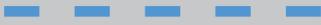
This proposal focuses on providing schools with the same level of responsive, personalized support that we are asking them to provide to their students. Our strategy will not only provide onsite school coaching and intensive technical assistance to successive cohorts of schools, it will also flexibly group schools and professional development to enhance the support system, prepare additional schools for the next stage of implementation, and ultimately achieve results at scale.

Table 3. The Three School Archetypes

	Leading Elements	Common Characteristics
Community-Driven School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and action plan • Moral courage • Continual improvement • Teacher recruitment and retention • Intervention and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schools have a strong vision for personalization and equity • Strong support and buy-in from faculty and community • Scores demonstrate self-awareness and necessary commitment • Scores are generally high across all elements (near or at the Performing phase) • Scores are “great,” but not “excellent,” on foundational elements such as Equity, Assessment Practices, and Time and Space
Leadership-Driven School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared leadership • Administrative leadership • Moral courage • Teacher recruitment and retention • Intervention and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores are high on leadership elements • With the exception of International and Multicultural Learning, scores are generally near the middle (the Developing phase) • Scores are “good,” but not “great,” on critical practices such as Standards-Based Education and Assessment Practices
Early-Adoption School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared leadership • Moral courage • Administrative leadership • Teacher recruitment and retention • Vision, mission and action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just beginning to embrace or implement personalized practices • Scores mirror the patterns seen in leadership-driven schools, but they are lower • Score are comparably strong on leadership elements, but still lagging behind • On most of the other elements, the schools are in the Initiating phase

Table 4. Representative Needs by Archetype

	Lagging Elements	Activities and Support
Community-Driven School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity • Assessment practices • Data systems and applications • Technology integration • Time and space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refinement of action plan and leadership team to support specific project objectives • Dissolution of academic tracking, which may require modifications to school curriculum and/or the introduction of new courses • Development of a new assessment systems, which may require the creation or adaptation of formative and summative assessment strategies, the development of new policies, and the adoption of new grading and data systems • Need to invest in information-technology infrastructure, which will require professional development for teachers with an emphasis on technology-embedded instructional strategies
Leadership-Driven School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and action plan • Time and space • Continual improvement • Standards-based education • Academic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluation of current action plan—if one exists—or the creation of a new and/or more accelerated action plan • Distribution and sharing of responsibilities among leadership team to implement and track the progress of the action plan—the team may need to visit other schools, research best practices, and select courses to pilot new modes of instruction • Development of school policies that support personalized-learning strategies and new graduation requirements • Creation of curriculum committee to create standards, determine learning progressions, and develop aligned assessment strategies
Early-Adoption School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and action plan • Equity • School culture • Continual improvement • Standards-based education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of an action plan with an ambitious timeline, interim benchmarks, and a system for tracking progress • Creation of a leadership team to oversee implementation of the action plan—team will need to visit other schools and research best practices • Community engagement needs to take place with parents, community leaders, school-board members, and other key stakeholders • Development of strategies for soliciting, incorporating, and acting upon student voice



Section V: Moving To Personalized Learning On A Regional Scale

Over the past decade, the replication of high-performing educational models has been one of the most sought-after goals identified by policy makers, education reformers, and major philanthropies in the United States. And yet replication—at scale—has remained an elusive goal. Our approach is motivated by a theory of action, detailed throughout this proposal, that strategically addresses the major barriers that have historically impeded the replication of high-performing educational models: (1) state and district policies that either obstruct, complicate, or fail to support educational innovation; (2) high-performing models that operate in relative isolation, without direct and sustained connections, interactions, and relationships with other schools and educators; and (3) an absence of the political and public will required to stimulate, drive, and sustain innovative change over the multiple years required to produce measureable, observable results. As noted earlier, the NESSC has made nationally-enviably progress in the creation and passage of innovative and supportive state policy, and we have seen solid forward progress regarding public engagement and support. These efforts have been successful and supported through various financial resources. As noted in our various needs assessments, progress in practice has seen some solid examples but lags in terms of broad implementation.

The League of Innovative Schools represents a significant departure from existing school-reform models. Historically, school redesign has taken one of two primary forms: (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 some success, both have failed to realize sustainable, large-scale improvements across a state or region—the NESSC’s goal. Far too often, broad support networks embrace such a wide variety of strategies that breadth is prioritized over depth, accountability is limited, and significant change fails to materialize. Alternatively, the progress made by high-performing model schools is rarely reproduced at scale or replicated in schools that lack similar levels of funding and support.

We designed the League to bring together the best features of these disparate transformation models, while also striving to overcome the limitations of each. While every member school makes the same commitment to improve, the League recognizes and embraces the fact that schools progress in different ways and at different rates. Our regional network is motivated by the belief—substantiated by research—that sustained, peer-to-peer collaboration can drive and accelerate school improvement. Instead of asking or expecting schools to emulate others, the network creates opportunities for the exchange of professional learning, sharing, reflection, and growth, thereby fostering the same sense of ownership and collective buy-in that is required for successful improvement in individual schools. Instead of holding up a handful of high-quality models as exemplars, League schools share their action plans and strategies, and their challenges and successes, creating an internal self-sustaining peer-to-peer accountability system.

The collaborative work of the League demonstrates that all schools – regardless of the types of students or communities they serve – have the ability to make learning personalized and equitable, and all students – regardless of their background or economic status – can learn in an environment that truly meets their needs. For the League to facilitate this collaboration between different schools, a range of institutions will be included in the initial cohort. The strength of the network relies on the inclusion of schools from different states, from different types of communities, and with different levels of resources.

Based on these beliefs and built from educator responses to the various surveys, we have designed a three pronged approach where we will (1) create and implement a multi-step implementation process for two initial cohorts of League schools (20-30 school in total) to create success models, (2) create a variety of amplification tools and process for these schools and all League Schools, and (3) quickly share lessons and build capacity across the full network of League Schools in order to rapidly scale up this effort.

Strategy I: A Cohort Model of Implementation

We start with the creation of an implementation support process. All schools are already engaged in the first step—participation in and commitment to the League. After deepening their understanding through League events, schools will engage in planning for implementation through a series of activities including an in-depth summer institute. Based on the development of successful plans, schools will move to a year of preparation activities supported by school coaching. The preparation year—12 months of intensive coaching support and targeted grant assistance—will ready the school faculty and community for full implementation during the subsequent school year. GSP school coaches will work closely with administrators and leadership teams to make significant progress on the action plan, establish the foundational organizational structures and policies required to transition to personalized learning, and enhance the understanding, skill sets, and capacity of the faculty and staff to prepare them for full implementation. Finally, schools will move to implementation, again supported by school coaching. The implementation year will focus on the core components of a high-performing personalized-learning system: proficiency-based instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting; a multiple-measures assessment strategy that incorporates authentic demonstrations of learning and personal learning plans; a systemic system of interventions; personalized learning pathways such as internships, dual-enrollment experiences, and online courses; and, broad data collection on school practices. Schools progressing through these steps will be arranged in cohort groups to further increase their support and foster the sharing of ideas and strategies.

Support Through School Coaching

Since its inception, the Great Schools Partnership has provided a wide variety of school-coaching services, technical assistance, and professional development to schools using an integrated, whole-school coaching model. A school coach's primary role is to keep a school community intensively focused on achieving its goals regardless of the obstacles that arise or the setbacks that occur. GSP does not have a prepackaged improvement program—we

recognize that every school is a complex, interdependent learning ecosystem, each with its own unique teachers and students, qualities and characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. While every school-improvement plan is developed in collaboration with administrators and faculty, our coaches utilize a repertoire of research-based techniques and data-driven strategies designed to move schools from underperforming to excelling. From policy and budgeting to professional development and instructional practices, our goal is to equip schools with the resources, knowledge, and know-how they need to achieve their goals and sustain individual and school-wide growth over multiple years. We are also continually refining and adapting our strategies—based on research, field experience, and the specialized needs of our schools and partners—to achieve measurable gains in student aspirations, achievement, and educational attainment.

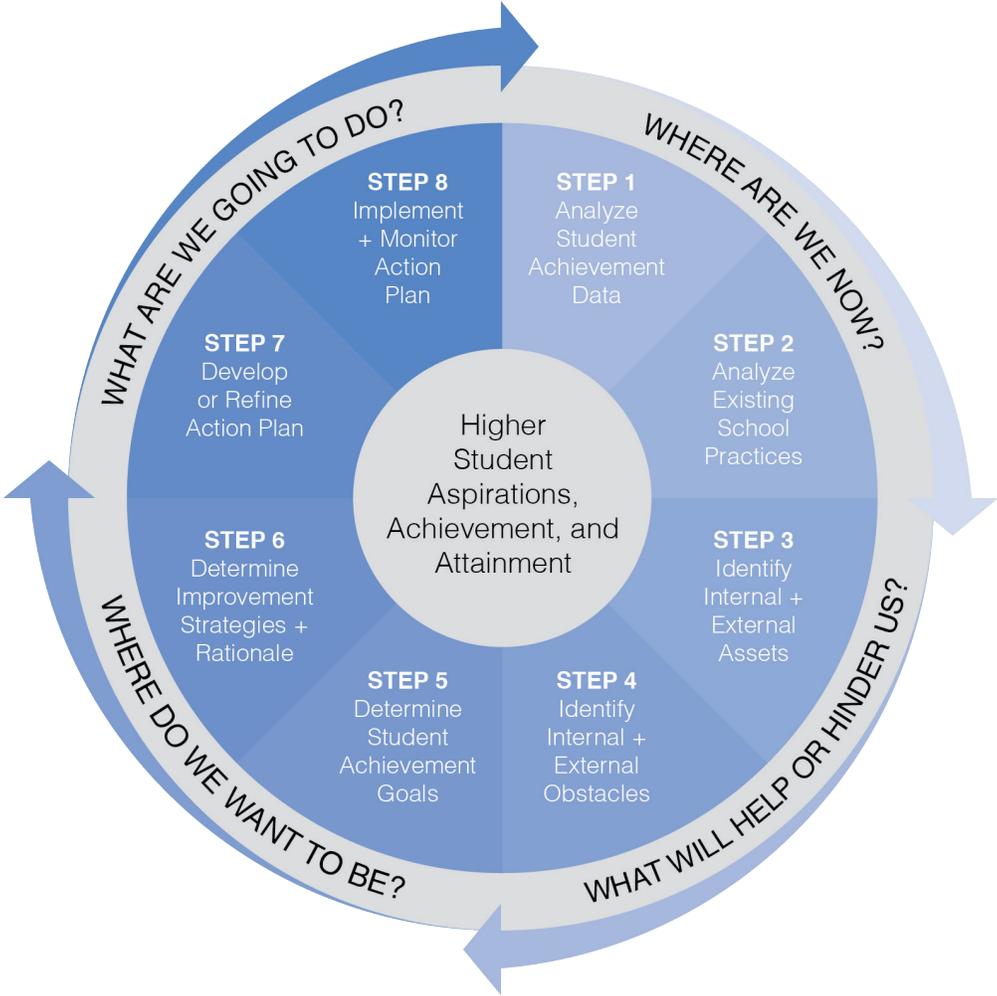


Figure 3. GSP Cycle of Action

Each school-coaching relationship begins with a comprehensive assessment of school capacity, resources, and preparedness before an action plan is developed. The assessment identifies strengths, weakness, opportunities, and priorities, which inform every dimension of the action plan. GSP uses a Cycle of Action (see figure 3—see Appendix L for the full Cycle of Action document) that has been developed in collaboration with hundreds of school leaders and educators over the past decade. Every action plan is designed to address specific organizational and student needs, maximize existing resources and capacity, and achieve the school’s vision for personalization, equity, and college readiness.

Recognizing that school coaches need to gain a deep understanding of a school, establish trusting relationships with the faculty and community members, and build the internal expertise needed to sustain the challenging work of school improvement, our school-coaching strategy will become progressively more intensive as schools move through the planning and implementation stages of this proposal. School coaches will be drawn from a combination of current GSP coaches (our intention is to assign our most experienced and skilled coaches into this work) as well as new hires with specialized expertise as needed. Critically, the school coaches assigned to League schools will all be fulltime GSP employees, not a collection of contractors and subcontractors, whose primary professional responsibility is improving schools. All GSP coaches are veteran educators who have had direct K-12 instructional and school-leadership roles and have years of experience in school coaching. In addition, the entire GSP staff meets on a weekly basis to coordinate projects, while monthly, daylong planning sessions provide the staff with ongoing professional development, problem solving, and collegial support.

Targeted Schools Grants

We will provide small grants to schools with Free and Reduced Lunch rates of 40% or more for use on local needs in alignment with their school implementation plans. Schools with a prevalence rate under 40% will not receive a block grant; the expectation is that they will have access to funds through their own districts, their SEAs, or other external sources. The theory of change of the League relies upon the participation of a diverse set of schools. Coaching a diverse array of schools, facilitating networking events, and rolling out new amplification tools will create a stronger collaborative network to impact the entire system at scale, exposing every school to the innovation taking place in neighboring districts.

Different school contexts will result in different funding uses while ensuring schools use funds in ways that will be most impactful for them. Suggested areas of spending could include weekend and after-school stipends for teachers to attend trainings and focus on planning, substitutes to allow teachers to participate in workshops during the school day, hosting school visits for others in the League, travel costs to visit other League schools, additional professional development, devices for students and classrooms, or other relevant costs.

Strategy II: Development of Amplification Tools

While commitment is high across League schools, progress has often been hurt by a lack of knowledge or processes to support development and implementation—schools need amplification tools to fulfill their commitments. Having such tools is a key aspect of scale. GSP has developed an extensive selection of resources and tools that support both systemic school improvement and personalized learning, yet deep development of personalization will require additional and more thoughtful support. GSP will continue to work closely with the Cohort schools and state education agencies to continue building new resources and aligning state support systems with the goals of this project. The following is a brief overview of some of the resources that will be available to League schools (for a detailed description of GSP tools, see Appendix J):

- **Action Planning.** iWalkthrough Action Planning, a web-based, action-planning system based on the *Global Best Practices* self-assessment process and dimensions.
- **Whole-School Assessment.** *Global Best Practices*, a research-based tool that facilitates systemic self-assessment, self-reflection, and planning, and that can be used by outside organizations for school-improvement evaluations.
- **Personalizing Learning.** Resources, Support, and Tools for Implementation, a comprehensive web-based library of guidance, exemplars, standards, and policies that will help school implement high-impact proficiency-based learning systems (many of the resources available on this site were originally developed for the Maine Department of Education and the Vermont Agency of Education; additional resources will be available in spring 2014).
- **Professional Learning Communities.** A full training program complemented by *Harnessing Teacher Knowledge*, a comprehensive assessment and planning tool designed to support school-based professional learning groups and the effective use of common planning time (developed through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education).
- **Systemic Support Strategies.** *First Response* and *Ninth Grade Counts*, two resources that help schools design and implement systemic ninth-grade transition programs and classroom-embedded interventions (developed through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education).
- **Site Visits.** *Learning in Action*, a detailed guide to planning school site visits.
- **Personal Learning Plans.** A step-by-step guide to designing and implementing personal learning plans (developed for the Vermont Agency of Education).
- **Instructional Observation.** iWalkthrough Classroom Observation, a web-based system that allows educators to conduct brief classroom observations, record evidence of teaching and learning strategies, and analyze instructional trends and patterns throughout a school.

- **Student Perspectives.** iWalkthrough Student Feedback, a web-based student survey system, based on the Measures of Effective Teaching study, that gives administrators and teacher detailed feedback on teaching and learning from the students' perspective.

Strategy III: Regional Network Coordination

GSP will provide the following support for all League members: (1) organization and facilitation of three regional networking meetings each school year devoted to professional development, training, and expertise exchange; (2) ongoing facilitation of school visits and peer-to-peer learning opportunities; (3) development and distribution of resources to support personalized learning and proficiency-based systems; and (4) coordination of the NESSC's annual High School Redesign in Action Conference.

In addition, in 2014 and 2015, GSP will coordinate and host four summer institutes for up to 35 League schools each year. These intensive, four-day institutes will be entirely dedicated to the development of a systemic action plan for the implementation of personalized learning, proficiency-based systems, and multiple pathways. Two summer institutes will be held between June and August of 2014, and two more will be held between June and August of 2015. Given the complexity of school and educator schedules during the summer months, holding two separate summer institutes each year will accommodate as many school teams as possible, while also allowing for greater flexibility in scheduling and location selection. Cohort 1 action plans will be finalized by August 2014, and Cohort 2 by August 2015. Because the summer institutes will be able to accommodate between 35–70 schools over two years, League members that are not selected for Cohort 1 may still receive action-planning support for up to two years from GSP.

Section VI: Selection & Support Process For Cohort Schools

While we believe the design of our work creates the opportunity for both deeper and broader school redesign, it has presented several unique challenges in the development of a rigorous selection process for the Next Gen Systems Initiative grant. In authentic personalized-learning systems, student achievement is evaluated against a set of common learning standards that are consistently applied regardless of whether students are enrolled in traditional courses, pursuing alternative learning options, or receiving the academic support they need to catch up with their peers. All forms of assessment are criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures or peer competition. We intend to apply the same principles and strategies that are the foundation of personalized learning to this project. We are not looking for the best five or ten schools that submit a proposal; we are looking for schools that meet our rigorous standards for capacity, commitment, and readiness.

Based on our years of experience coordinating the League, and findings from the evaluation process and needs assessments conducted during the Phase I planning process, we are confident that 10–15 League members will be able to demonstrate the capacity, commitment, and readiness required to receive the coaching support and resources described in this proposal by August 2014, and that a second cohort of 10–15 League members will meet the standard by August 2015. A complete timeline with selection processes and corresponding supports can be found in Appendix G.

Full League Engagement (February 2014–April 2014)

Beginning in February 2014, GSP will notify all 75 League members about the Next Gen Systems Initiative grant, educate them about the opportunity and process, and make sure commitments as outlined by the required activities and benchmarks are clearly articulated and fully understood. During this process, we will provide League schools with the following resources and support:

- Documents describing the opportunity, the goals and objectives, the selection and support process, the implementation timeline, and the project’s expectations, requirements, and commitments.
- Resources, protocols, and guidance that will help schools undertake a community-engagement process that includes all stakeholders—educators, students, parents, school board, and community members.
- An informational webinar that addresses all of the above and that will also be archived online.
- An in-person overview of the opportunity during the mandatory meeting of League principals and leadership teams that will be held in conjunction with the annual High School Redesign in Action conference on March 20–21, 2014.
- Site visits from senior SEA staff and GSP coaches to provide follow-up information and support.
- Teleconference and video conference meetings and support from GSP as needed.

The activities and related supports described above will ensure that every League member fully understands the project, what it entails, and what opportunities, supports, and resources will be available to them. Schools interested in participation in Cohort I will notify NESSC regarding their intention to participate in the planning institute offered over the 2014 summer. We anticipate that 25-35 schools will notify us of this intention. These schools will be required to (1) submit a formal memorandum of understanding to the Great Schools Partnership signed—at minimum—by the school board chair, superintendent, principal, and at least one teacher-leader, such as union or leadership-team representative; (2) agree to attend one of the two summer institutes offered by GSP between June and August 2014; and—should their model meet all of the identified criteria in August 2014—agree to (3) engage in preparation activities during the 2014/15 school year; (4) host site visits from other League members for a period of at least three years; (5) share their action plan, organization design, curriculum

materials, and school-improvement work with other League members during and between League meetings; and (6) participate in a mentoring partnership over the course of the 2015–2016 school year with at least one other League school engaged in Cohort 2 preparation.

League schools that either choose not to participate in this first summer of specific planning or after going through the summer planning have realized that they are not quite ready for the August 2015 launch have still made a formal, public commitment to implementing personalized learning—just not on the aggressive timeline that Cohort I will follow. And all League schools will continue to participate in network activities and professional development, while also benefitting from the investments being made in Cohort I. By April 2015, a second set of schools will decide to participate in the summer planning institutes (some of which may be doing this for a second time), and by August 2015, a second cohort of League schools will demonstrate readiness to move towards concrete implementation.

Cohort I Engagement (May 2014–August 2014)

Our engagement process and timeline for Cohort I are aligned with the guidelines provided by the Gates Foundation for Phase II and Phase III, although we will be using a series of vetting strategies to narrow the field of potential grantee schools, rather than using a traditional RFP process. Our selection process will combine two key strategies: (1) a comprehensive analysis of school action plans, capacity, improvement work, and progress to date against the detailed criteria and performance scales described in *Global Best Practices* (Table 5), and (2) demonstrated commitment through the implementation of a series of specific required supporting practices and district policies (Table 6). Importantly, the decision that will be made about each school at the end of each step in the process will either be “yes” or “not yet”—never “no.” This will encourage all schools to stay involved with the League enabling all schools to benefit and grow even as we devote more support to a smaller subset.

The engagement process will entail:

1. A school-wide self-assessment using *Global Best Practices* that involves a representative selection of stakeholders from across the school community, including faculty, staff members, students, parents, school board members, local leaders, and community members (a process far more inclusive and thorough than the assessment and needs survey completed by principals during Phase I of this project). As desired, staff from GSP and/or senior SEA staff will work directly with each school participating in data analysis, document reviews, classroom observations, and interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and school-board members to provide an outside and consistent view of school success. Schools will use these results to make an initial decision regarding readiness to progress to full planning through the summer institute. Schools scoring lower on this assessment may determine that August 2015 implementation is simply not doable and that they will require more preparation time. Consequently, they would continue engagement with the full League, but not participate in the summer institute in 2014.
2. Schools that determine they are ready for launch in August 2015 will identify a representative team comprising the principal, district leaders, and faculty to attend one

of two four-day summer institutes offered June, July, or August (dates TBD). The intensive institutes will enable schools to create and finalize a comprehensive implementation plan that will detail the specific personalized learning model the school will implement and outline the specific activities, roles, responsibilities, coaching support, and resources the school will need to begin implementation in August 2015 and meet the progress benchmarks for the 2014–2015 school year. The *Global Best Practices* self-assessment will provide baseline information for this process.

3. If 40 percent or more of their student population is eligible for free and reduced price lunch, schools that engage in the summer institute will be eligible to apply for targeted grants of up to \$6,000 per school to subsidize stipends or honoraria for educators who are not on yearlong contracts. The grants will allow these schools to bring representative teams of teacher-leaders and critical staff members to one of the two summer institutes.
4. In August 2014, GSP and NESSC leaders will review implementation plans based on requirements outlined in Tables 5 and 6, make the final determinations for Cohort 1 and notify the 10–15 schools selected. The schools that attended the summer institutes, but did not create implementation plans that met the criteria, will be invited to the 2015 summer institutes and encouraged to continue advancing their work for possible selection as a Cohort 2 school in August 2015. Cohort members will continue to participate in regional networking activities and receive support through the NESSC.

Table 5. LIS Global Best Practices Design, Implementation, and Demonstration Benchmark Scores

	August 2014 (design)	June 2016 (implementation)	June 2017 (demonstration)
1.1 Equity	4	4	5
1.2 Personalization + Relevance	4	4	5
1.3 Academic Expectations	4	4	5
1.4 Standards-Based Education	4	4	4
1.5 Assessment Practices	4	4	4
1.6 International + Multicultural Learning	3	3	4
1.7 Technology Integration	4	4	4
1.8 Learning Communities	3	3	4
2.1 Vision, Mission + Action Plan	4	4	5
2.2 School Culture	4	4	4
2.3 Multiple Pathways	4	4	5
2.4 Transitions	3	3	4
2.5 Interventions + Support	4	4	4
2.6 Time + Space	4	4	5
2.7 Data Systems + Applications	4	4	4
2.8 Continual Improvement	4	4	4
3.1 Teacher Recruitment / Retention	3	3	4
3.2 Administrative Leadership	4	4	4
3.3 Shared Leadership	4	4	5
3.4 Moral Courage	4	4	5

Gates Foundation Next Gen Systems Initiative

Project Timeline and Selection Tree

480 Public High Schools in the Five New England Secondary School Consortium States
75 League of Innovative Schools Members (16 percent)

February 2014–June 2014

Exploring the Next Gen Systems Initiative Opportunity

- GSP informs League members and determines interest
- League members participate in networking events
- Schools begin Global Best Practices self-assessment
- GSP-led team visits interested schools

Yes ▼

June 2014–August 2014

Cohort 1 Selection Process

- Self-assessments and school visits completed
- GSP and NESSC leads evaluate composite scores
- Up to 35 League schools attend two summer planning institutes
- School implementation plans finalized and reviewed
- 10–15 Cohort 1 schools selected for 2014–2015 school year

Yes ▼

September 2014–December 2014

Cohort 1 Preparation Year Begins

- Cohort 1 begins implementation to meet Phase II benchmarks
- GSP-led evaluation team visits all 10–15 schools in December
- Cohort 1 schools that meet benchmarks continue into Phase III

Yes ▼

January 2015–August 2015

Cohort 1 Preparation Year Ends and Cohort 2 Begins

- Cohort 1 works to meet Phase III benchmarks
- Up to 35 League schools attend two summer planning institutes
- School implementation plans finalized and reviewed
- 10–15 Cohort 2 schools selected for 2015–2016 school year

Yes ▼

September 2015–June 2016

Cohort 1 Implementation Year Begins; Cohort 2 Preparation Year Begins

- Cohort 1 begins full implementation of action plan
- Cohort 2 works to meet benchmarks for preparation year
- GSP-led evaluation team visits all Cohort 2 schools in December
- Cohort 2 schools that meet benchmarks continue work in January

Yes ▼

July 2016–June 2017

Cohort 2 Implementation Year Begins; Cohort 2 Preparation Year Begins

- Cohort 2 begins full implementation of action plan

Support Offered to All League Members

- Regional networking meetings three times a year
- NESSC annual High School Redesign in Action conference
- Ongoing professional development events, webinars, and training opportunities
- All League members have access to NESSC tools and resources
- League members visit to other member schools
- GSP and NESSC works to secure support for League activities
- NESSC states work to align state programs and support with League goals

Not Yet ►

Figure 4. Project Timeline and Selection Tree

School implementation plans will be evaluated by GSP and SEA staff against an expected level of implementation on the 20 dimensions of *Global Best Practices* and demonstration of achievement of specific actions and policies in line with these dimensions. Schools will not be judged against each other but against this set of criteria determining readiness. The following benchmark scores for each of the twenty dimensions will be used to make the Cohort 1 selections:

Cohort 1 Preparation Year (September 2014–August 2015)

The 10–15 Cohort 1 schools selected in August 2014 will begin 12 months of activities intended to prepare them for full implementation in the 2015–2016 school year. During this stage, all Cohort 1 schools will be assigned an experienced GSP school coach who will meet several times per month with the school to support the wide variety of activities required to meet the implementation benchmarks of Phase II and Phase III (see Table 5.) below for a detailed outline of the benchmarks). In addition to other forms of support, the school will monitor progress on the action plan, work closely with the administration and leadership team on strategy, provide professional-development and capacity-building workshops, analyze student-achievement data, support community-engagement strategies, and work with the school board and local leaders to build understanding of and support for personalized learning, proficiency-based strategies, and multiple pathways.

In addition to regional networking opportunities, resources, and the onsite support of a school coach, schools with a FRL-eligibility percentage of 40 percent or greater will also be able to submit a request for up to \$25,000 to support their work over the 12-month preparation period. The supplemental funding, to be approved by GSP and NESSC leaders, must be detailed and justified in the school's final implementation plan, and it must be used to support strategically important purchases, stipends, or programs. The funding will not be awarded as an incentive, but used as a catalyst for schools that require strategically important short-term investments. The funding may be used toward the purchase of electronic devices, curriculum materials, high-need professional development, selected travel opportunities (such as site visits to other League schools), or staff stipends that support Cohort 1 objectives. For all Cohort 1 schools, including those that do not meet the 40-percent-eligibility requirement, GSP and SEA leaders will help the schools review budgetary priorities and take advantage of state funding should the need for additional supplemental funding arise.

While GSP will invest heavily in Cohort 1 schools to ensure readiness for full implementation in September 2015, other League schools will continue to receive support through the regional network. The goal is to accelerate the progress of Cohort 1 schools while continuing to advance the work and preparedness of other League members. By August 2015, we anticipate that another 10–15 schools will be prepared to meet the selection standards for Cohort 2.

In December 2014, a GSP-led team of coaches and NESSC leaders will visit all Cohort 1 schools to determine whether they have met all Phase II benchmarks and are on track to meeting the Phase III benchmarks that will prepare them for full implementation in September 2015. It is possible that some of the 10–15 Cohort 1 schools may fail to achieve the required benchmarks or make adequate progress, in which case GSP and NESSC leaders may decide

to discontinue Cohort 1 support. While we want to use the possibility of discontinued support as an extra incentive to meet the required benchmarks, we expect that all or nearly all schools will make sufficient progress and proceed to Phase III.

Table 6. Required Activities Aligned to GBP Dimensions

A. Teaching and Learning

Required Activity	Aligned GBP Dimension	Deadline
The school has clearly defined graduation learning standards that lead to college and career readiness (and is on track to adopt these for the start of the 2015-2016 school year).	1.3 Academic Expectations	December 2014
The school board has taken steps to support proficiency-based graduation through policy and/or adherence to state requirements (and is on track to adopt these for the start of the 2015-2016 school year)	1.3 Academic Expectations	December 2014
The school must have adequate bandwidth to support access for all students.	1.7 Technology Information	December 2014
School must have trained Professional Learning Group facilitators.	1.8 Learning Communities	December 2014
Every course and learning pathway offered by the school leads to graduation and college and career readiness. All courses are open for all students.	1.1 Equity	August 2015
All students have a personalized learning plan.	1.2 Personalization & Relevance	August 2015
Students are empowered to make demonstrable decisions about how, when, and where they engage in learning within classrooms and in other settings.	1.2 Personalization & Relevance	August 2015
Every student completes and submits an application to college, the armed services, career or trade licensing program, certificate-producing training program, or equivalent.	1.3 Academic Expectations	August 2015
Student learning is reported based on the demonstration of proficiency in each learning standard.	1.4 Standards-Based Education	August 2015
Students, parents and teachers can access student achievement data aligned with graduation learning standards.	1.4 Standards-Based Education	August 2015
The school has a multiple-methods assessment system to measure student achievement of all graduation learning standards.	1.5 Assessment Expectations	August 2015
Every student has access to an electronic computing device (either via a bring your own device policy or provided by the school).	1.7 Technology Information	August 2015
All teachers must participate in professional learning groups for at least 2 hours per month.	1.8 Learning Communities	August 2015

B. Organizational Design

Required Activity	Aligned GBP Dimension	Deadline
The school board has taken steps to support policy that enables students to use learning outside of school and the school day through ELOs, internships, and early college opportunities to demonstrate achievement of standards (and is on track to adopt these for the start of the 2015-2016 school year).	2.3 Multiple Pathways	December 2014
The school has implemented an annual process to review student learning data in order to support continual improvement.	2.8 Continual Improvement	December 2014
The principal and other educators in the building regularly visit classrooms and collect data about the extent to which instructional practices are aligned with personalized learning and share and analyze data on the overall instructional patterns with the full faculty at least twice a year.	2.8 Continual Improvement	December 2014
The school has a formal process to share information on student learning between middle and high school teachers.	2.4 Transitions	August 2015
The school has implemented a system of comprehensive interventions and supports that provides support to every student.	2.5 Intervention and Support	August 2015
Students, teachers and parents can access student performance data in real time.	2.7 Data Systems & Applications	August 2015

C. Leadership

Required Activity	Aligned GBP Dimension	Deadline
The school has a leadership team comprising teachers, students, and administrators with a process for parental involvement.	3.3 Shared Leadership	March 2014
The principal participates in a monthly meeting (in-person, virtual, and/or phone-call) with other principals in the LIS in a Professional Learning Network sharing successes, discussing and addressing challenges, and learning with and from one another. The superintendent assures that the principal will have the time and support to meet this requirement.	3.2 Administrative Leadership	September 2014

Entering the 2015 calendar year (the start of funding for Phase III), we intend to have three distinct progress tracks in place: (1) a group of 10–15 Cohort 1 schools that are on track to begin full implementation of personalized-learning systems at the start of the 2015–2016 school year; (2) a group of 20–30 schools that are working to potentially become one of 10–15 Cohort 2 schools in August 2015; and (3) a growing number of League members who are joining the League, participating in network activities and professional learning, and making a commitment to personalized learning, proficiency-based systems, and multiple pathways.

As Cohort 1 moves toward implementation, they will also be hosting site visits from other League schools, and sharing their implementation plan, organizational design, curriculum materials, and school-improvement work with other League members during and between League meetings.

Cohort 1 Implementation Year & Cohort 2 Planning Year (September 2015–June 2016)

While the common progress benchmarks articulated above will inform all progress evaluations during the 2014–2015 school year, individual school benchmarks for full implementation in 2015–2016 will be described and outlined in each school’s implementation plan. The same level of onsite coaching support will be provided during the implementation year, and a GSP-led team will again conduct a mid-year progress evaluation of Cohort 1 in December 2015. Success and progress will not only be measured by a school’s performance on the *20 Global Best Practices* dimensions and the common set of implementation activities, but also by achievement of each school’s unique benchmarks.

Following the 2015 summer institutes and selection decisions in August 2015, GSP will begin providing coaching support to Cohort 2 schools to prepare for full implementation during the 2016–2017 school year. We anticipate between 10–15 Cohort 2 schools that will—most likely—be drawn from the schools that participated in the 2015 summer institutes and/or that received mentoring from Cohort 1 schools. Unlike in 2014, no funding will be available to subsidize team participation in the 2015 summer institutes, as schools will have the opportunity to put these financial needs into their local budget process. The same standards-based evaluation and selection process will be used to determine Cohort 2, and the structure of the Cohort will mirror the same strategies described for Cohort 1—with, of course, some modifications based on evolving needs and lessons learned.

Like Cohort 1 schools, Cohort 2 schools with a minimum FRL-eligibility percentage of 40 percent will also be able to submit a request for up to \$25,000 to support their work over the 12-month preparation period. The supplemental funding, to be approved by GSP and NESSC leaders, will also need to be detailed and justified in the school’s final implementation plan, and it must be used to support strategically important purchases, stipends, or programs. As with Cohort 1, funding will not be awarded as an incentive, but used as stimulant for schools that require strategically important short-term investments.

While maintaining fidelity to the overall goals and structure of this proposal, GSP will regularly review its processes and strategies, and make any in-process modifications needed to improve the effectiveness and impact of the project. We are committed to making sure that our processes are as responsive and adaptable as the interventions and learning experiences being provided to students in our grantee schools.

Cohort 2 Implementation Year & Cohort 3 Preparation Year (July 2016–June 2017)

At this point, direct on-site support for Cohort 1 schools will cease, while we continue support for the Cohort 2 implementation year. We fully intend to simultaneously be supporting a Cohort 3 preparation year although funding has not yet been procured. To this end, we have started to establish commitments for financial support from both state education agencies and directly from schools.

Section VII – Sustainability

As we have articulated throughout our proposal, this project is being presented in the context of the full scope of achievements and progress made by the New England Secondary School Consortium and the five states of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The vision and objectives of this project have not only been endorsed by a diverse collection of state and regional leaders, but policies are already in place to require or encourage public schools throughout New England to embrace the principles and practices of personalized learning. This project is the culmination of five years of work and progress that will continue regardless of whether funding is awarded. Sustainability, in our case, is not just a goal—we have demonstrated that the structure, the policies, the leadership, and the commitment are already in place.

We believe that what sets this project, and the League apart, is our dual commitment to supporting both a subset of schools and a growing regional network. We are not relying on the assumption of replication—we are actively building and growing a regional network devoted to facilitating collaboration, resource sharing, and expertise exchange. We are actively creating the professional context and culture required to promote new ideas, empower school leaders, and foster the replication of high-performing models throughout a region. All League members, including Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools, will continue to attend in-state and regional League meetings and networking activities, the NESSC’s annual conference, and other professional-development opportunities provided by the SEAs, NESSC, and their partners.

Working proactively, we have identified two potential factors that could impact our potential ability to sustain the NESSC during and beyond Phase III: (1) shifting political and policy priorities resulting from gubernatorial elections, education chief turnover, state and federal legislative actions, or federal executive actions; and (2) shifting public will and support. While the NESSC has remained intact and operational despite gubernatorial and commissioner turnover in every state, it is possible—given the unstable and often contentious nature of contemporary political partisanship—that the goals and objectives of the NESSC are not endorsed by a future governor or commissioner, or that political priorities or state policies dramatically change. This is no different from a change in the superintendent or school board at a district level. It is also possible the tide of public opinion turns against us, but the idea of personalizing learning appears to be gaining rapid momentum, not losing it.

While these scenarios are possible, we believe we have established strategies to overcome these unlikely events. The goals and the objectives of the NESSC and this project have

been endorsed by state agencies, commissioners, legislatures, state boards, and numerous educational leaders and school administrators across New England. The NESSC Council is filled with influential champions that support the NESSC. The teams of SEA staff in each state that support NESSC activities will continue to hold jobs in the SEA despite the inevitable turnover in commissioners. We have built a coalition of 75 schools that are not participating on the condition of funding. All our states have adopted the Common Core State Standards and have invested heavily in their implementation and in aligned assessments. Our key funding partner, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, is making significant investments in the redesign of districts throughout New England—all of which are aligned with the same student-centered principals and objectives described in this proposal—and the foundation will be making additional investments in public will, understanding, and engagement. Our participating SEAs have contributed more than \$1.1 million in state funding to support various NESSC activities, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation has invested \$1.6 million in the NESSC. And other foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (through an earlier investment in Nellie Mae), have contributed more than \$1 million. The NESSC will continue to secure the support of professional organizations in each state, including teacher, superintendent, principal, and school board membership organizations. We are confident that the NESSC and its partners will be able to continue building support, aligning initiatives, and securing funding and resources for NESSC and the League of Innovative Schools.

In addition, we are hopeful that some level of state financial support for personalized pathways and proficiency-based learning will be forthcoming in the next few years. While SEAs operate in accordance with budgets and priorities that require legislative approval, the first year of the two-year legislative cycle occurs from January through June 2015 for two-year budgets that start July 1, 2015 in each of our states. The timing is right, and the five NESSC states continue efforts to secure legislative approval of financial resources for the state policies and programs aligned with the NESSC agenda and the objectives of this project.

As described throughout this proposal, the investments that will be made in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 are not ends in themselves—they are part of an acceleration strategy in a much broader and far-reaching regional initiative. We anticipate that, over time, schools both in and outside of the League will continue to improve and progress.

The NESSC is the work of our five states and their collaboration—not an added event. We have established a solid policy foundation and generated significant public will and support for personalized learning. Sustainability is a built-in component of this work, as assured as the continuation of state education agencies and state policy.

Section VIII: GSP Capacity

The Great Schools Partnership is a nonprofit school-support organization and works to redesign and strengthen public and private education to improve the quality of learning for all students. With decades of collective service in support of secondary schools, we offer school coaching, professional development, and technical assistance to educators, schools, districts, and state agencies. We also develop cutting-edge tools and resources, conduct and publish school-based research, and oversee the implementation of major public and private grants. Our long history of direct support inside schools has prepared us to take on the Gates Next Gen Systems Initiative work. We have established a wealth of supports and tools for schools, which will serve as the foundation for this work. Many of these tools are made publicly available, and could provide equally fundamental support to other districts engaging in this work.

One of the primary capacities of the Great Schools Partnership is school coaching, a key component of this proposal. Each GSP coach has extensive school improvement experience. Most have been school or district administrators and have led successful comprehensive school transformation. All have graduate degrees in leadership, curriculum, or policy. Several coaches have also served as faculty members in teacher and administrator preparation programs across the country. Many coaches have worked in several states.

Once hired, new GSP coaches are closely mentored. During their first year, new coaches also share one or two school coaching assignments with an experienced coach. In this way, they can learn and develop their knowledge and skills alongside a more seasoned colleague. In addition, GSP conducts monthly full-day learning retreats for our entire staff. These sessions are devoted to learning deeply from current dilemmas and successes, drafting and refining new tools and resources, and to acquiring and developing new coaching skills.

As an illustration, the following four staff profiles provide an indication of the skill, experience, and knowledge levels of GSP staff members who are typical of the individuals who will lead this effort and provide LIS members with school coaching:

- David Ruff, Executive Director, GSP, Project Oversight. David will provide project oversight for this proposal, ensuring alignment with all NESSC and state activities. David was a founding director for the Great Schools Partnership and one of several founding members for the NESSC. He has extensive school coaching experience across New England supporting the implementation of proficiency-based learning and multiple pathways to ensure equitable personalization. Recently, David has supported SEAs in their strategic efforts to create and implement policy and practice to ensure proficiency-based learning.
- Mark Kostin, Ed.D., Project Director: Mark will serve as the project director for this initiative. Mark joined the GSP in 2003 and is currently the associate director. Mark has worked as a science teacher in Canada's largest school system in Toronto prior to moving to the U.S. to pursue his graduate studies. He has been a school administrator

in a large rural school district in Vermont and was a tenured faculty member at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, GA where he directed an award-winning proficiency-based secondary education program and oversaw the field experiences and partnership in dozens of districts for over 1,000 university students a year. Mark has coached school districts large and small in Maine and has helped several successfully make the transition to a proficiency-based learning system. In the last several years Mark has co-coordinated the NESSC and has split his time supporting the development of policy in state education agencies and supporting the efforts of the League of Innovative Schools.

- Angela Hardy, M.Ed., School Coach: Angela is a senior associate with the Great Schools Partnership. She was a teacher in coastal Maine before transitioning into administrative roles at the building, district, and county level. Much of her administrative work focused on developing ongoing professional-learning experiences for educators and supporting networks of professionals inclined to learn from and with one another. Before joining GSP, Angela was an experiential education center director and co-director of teacher education for a grades 7–12 science preparation program at a small, private college. She currently coaches in high schools in Maine. Angela served as a lead author of the majority of the proficiency-based graduation tools that were developed in partnership with the Maine Department of Education and played a similar role in the recently released Personal Learning Plan tools and resources unveiled by the Vermont Agency of Education. As a coach, Angela has been helping schools transition to a proficiency-based diploma, develop shared leadership, and support professional learning communities.
- Ken Templeton, M.Ed., School Coach: Ken is a senior associate and works as a school coach who specializes in data literacy, instructional improvement, shared decision making, and implementing proficiency-based learning. He was formerly a visiting instructor in the education department at Bowdoin College, and in 2008 and 2009 he was a facilitator for the Redesigning High Schools for Improved Instruction institute at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is a former high school English teacher, with experience teaching in Lewiston and Gorham, Maine, and in Stockport, England. Ken’s professional interests include teacher learning, democratic leadership models, and rich, equitable curricula for all students. He is a board member of the Maine Humanities Council. He received his B.A. from Bowdoin College and his M.Ed. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Ken also serves as the director of GSP’s iWalkthrough suite of digital tools and has been supporting the development of thoughtful, manageable, and effective educator effectiveness approaches in school districts across the country.