

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

a briefing series for new england's educational leaders

Q: How can we improve our high schools?

A: Bold, innovative leadership—**your leadership.**

The [New England Secondary School Consortium](#) supports education leaders like you who are committed to strengthening our high schools.

What Can the World's Best Schools Teach Us?

When our students graduate, they will enter a world that is no longer defined by national borders, and they will be competing for jobs alongside ambitious, highly skilled workers from Europe, Asia, and countries across the globe. In an age when customer-service calls can be answered in India, we need to empower the next generation with the best education possible. Our high schools can look abroad for new lessons and innovative ideas that will help them prepare students for success regardless of where life takes them.

What We've Learned

- ✓ **Appreciation, respect, and prestige matter (a lot).** In countries with high-performing school systems, teaching is generally a high-status profession—teachers command the same respect that doctors or lawyers do in the United States. Teachers are not only selected from the top of their graduating classes, but teaching jobs are competitive, well compensated, and culturally celebrated.
- ✓ **Holding every student to high expectations is essential.** The world's strongest education systems use a single set of learning standards to drive course design, lessons, and teaching throughout the country. Their standards are not only demanding, but they reflect what students will need to know and be able to do as working adults. The [Common Core State Standards](#) are bringing the United States closer to this goal.
- ✓ **Teaching is more important than...almost everything else.** It turns out that—just like in American schools—delivering high-quality instruction in every classroom is the most effective way to improve performance and give students the best possible chance for success in life. The world's best schools prioritize teaching quality above everything else.
- ✓ **Strong leaders make a huge difference.** In school systems that make big gains in student performance, leaders at every level of the education system work together to create strong improvement plans based on sound strategies. School leaders also receive specialized training and most are former teachers who know what students need most.
- ✓ **Money matters—but only if it's spent wisely.** In the United States, students from lower-income households and zip codes typically don't perform as well as students from wealthier families and communities. High-performing countries provide more funding and resources to the schools and students that need it most. Every school can improve dramatically if it invests thoughtfully in high standards, great teachers, and strong leaders, and there are numerous high-performing schools located in disadvantaged or economically struggling communities throughout the United States.

Want to Learn More?

Visit the [Leadership in Action website](#) and download *I Want to Know More*, a selection of information and resources for those interested in reading more about how today's students learn.

Still have questions? [Find your state contact.](#)