

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

a briefing series for new england's educational leaders

Nearly one in three U.S. high school students doesn't graduate.

Our goal: Every student graduates **prepared**.

The [New England Secondary School Consortium](#) wants to make sure that every student graduates prepared for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of the 21st century. Do you share our goal?

What Should a 21st Century High School Look Like?

In the whirlwind of the 20th century, the United States became a global economic powerhouse mainly because it had the world's most educated workforce. But America's competitive edge has since disappeared. How can we make sure our students and citizens are once again among the best educated in the world?

What We've Learned

- ✓ **High school is not a building.** While good facilities are important, school performance is largely determined by the quality of its teaching. Learning doesn't need to be confined to the school day or the four walls of a classroom—students can learn anytime and anywhere. Combining classroom teaching with outside-of-school learning experiences—from community internships to online courses to “early college” programs that give students a taste of higher education—will better prepare the next generation for the real-world challenges of adult life.
- ✓ **Graduation is not the end of the educational journey.** A high school education used to be enough to get a good job and support a family—but that's simply no longer the case. Today's students need a college degree or some form of advanced training that prepares them to excel in their chosen professional field. The best high schools promote a “lifelong learning” mindset and encourage every student to consider and pursue continued education after high school.
- ✓ **Different students learn in different ways.** The traditional one-size-fits-all approach to high school no longer works. Not everyone learns effectively by reading a textbook and taking a test. Today's schools need to engage individual student interests, learning needs, and career aspirations, while ensuring that every diploma certifies strong preparation for college and modern jobs. In today's best high schools, students are encouraged to take different paths to reach the same goal.
- ✓ **Schools need to embrace the “new basics.”** *Reading, writing, and arithmetic* have long stood for the fundamentals every student must learn—and the “basics” are as relevant and urgently needed today as they ever were. But many experts are now calling for an additional three Rs: *rigor, relevance, and relationships*. In other words, every student must be challenged and held to high expectations, lessons should engage personal interests and ambitions, and teachers need to know their students well and deliver the support they need to succeed. In the 21st century, high schools must move beyond a narrow focus on **what** they teach and reinvent **how** they teach it. Great schools make the basics come alive.

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](#).