TALKING ABOUT PROFICIENCY:
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

#NESSC14

AGENDA

Thursday, March 20
7:30 a.m.
Registration – Foyer
8:30 a.m.
Pre-Conference Sessions
(Pre-registration required)
11:30 a.m.
Lunch on your own
1:00 p.m.
Pleural Session: Re-affirming Our Commitment to Personalized Learning and Voices From Our Schools – Tiffany Ballroom
2:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions
(9 sessions)
3:30 p.m.
Break – Break Stations
(1st + 2nd floors)
3:45 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions
(10 sessions)
5:00 p.m.
Hors d’oeuvres and Special performance by Cabot School student band, The Limes! – Foyer
5:45 p.m.
Networking
• Special Student Networking Session – Essex/Lennox Room
• Educator Networking – Foyer
7:00 p.m.
Dinner on your own
8:00 p.m.
#NESSC14 / #EdChatME: Twitter Chat – Essex/Lennox Room

Friday, March 21
7:00 a.m.
Continental Breakfast – Ballroom Terrace + Foyer
8:15 a.m.
Plenary Session: Student Voice in the Learning Process – Tiffany Ballroom
9:15 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions
(10 sessions)
10:30 a.m.
Break – Break Stations
(1st + 2nd floors)
10:45 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions
(10 sessions)
12:00 p.m.
Lunch and NESSC Awards Ceremony – Tiffany Ballroom + Foyer
1:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions
(9 sessions)
2:30 p.m.
Adjournment
(no closing ceremony)

#MPA16

all materials at:
greatschoolspartnership.org/mpa-2016
WHO WE ARE

Angela Hardy
Director of Coaching
@islandteacher05

Jon Ingram
Senior Associate
Outcomes

I can describe the core elements about communicating with the public about my school/district
I can identify next steps I can take now to effectively communicate our school/district’s work.
Agenda

Who We Are and What We Believe

Biggest Communication Challenges

Core Principles + Entry Points

Resources
Is a non-profit support organization based in Portland working nationally with schools, districts and state agencies, providing coaching, and developing tools.
GSP has assisted the Maine Principals’ Association with the Summer Leadership Retreat since 2013.
We Believe

In equitable, personalized, rigorous learning for all students leading to readiness for college, careers, and citizenship
We Believe

That schools must simultaneously attend to policy, practice, and community engagement.
We Believe

School improvement is context-based, not one-size fits all.
What is Proficiency-Based Learning?
PUBLIC PERCEPTION
Phi Delta Kappa-Gallup
Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools
75% Public schools = stink
50% Local public schools = great
75% My kid’s school = great
Greatest Hurdles

With respect to your proficiency-based learning work, what is the great communication hurdle you are facing?
THREE CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Why It Matters
2. Specificity
3. Metaphors
“We’re going to be formatively assessing your child throughout the school year.”
“We’re going to make sure your child has actually learned what he was taught.”

Goal
Why It Matters

...for your audience
...for students
...for your community
...for society
Without Education

Violence, crime, genocide, war
Oppression of women, minorities, etc.
Tyranny, authoritarian governments
Mass censorship, government propaganda
Poverty, hunger, humanitarian disasters
Failed states, social instability, chaos
w/ Education

Food, plumbing, water, civic infrastructure
Democracy, independent media, free speech
Lower crime, incarceration rates
More jobs, higher incomes and tax revenues
People are healthier, report being happier
More voting, charity, volunteerism
WHY PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING?
Project-Based Learning

AVOID ABSTRACTIONS
EMBRACE SPECIFICITY
Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on foreign aid?

- Too much: 54%
- Too little: 17%
- About the right amount: 24%
- Don't know/Refused: 6%

Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on efforts to improve health for people in developing countries?

- Too much: 21%
- Too little: 32%
- About the right amount: 34%
- Don't know/Refused: 6%

Percent who say they feel favorable about each of the following and percent who say they are aware each is included in the health reform law:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Favorable View</th>
<th>Aware ACA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax credits to small businesses to buy insurance</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Medicare &quot;doughnut hole&quot;</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create health insurance exchanges</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of dependent coverage</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy assistance to individuals</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid expansion</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteed issue</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical loss ratio</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Medicare payroll tax</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer mandate/penalty for large employers</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual mandate/penalty</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Items asked of separate half samples. Question wording abbreviated. See topline [here](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8425.cfm) for complete wording.

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 5-10, 2013)
Specificity is a pathway to understanding
Our future prosperity will not be built on low standards or unprepared graduates. **When every student graduates prepared**, only then will we know that our future is in good hands, and that we have guaranteed every citizen’s universal right to a great education.
It is not enough that we simply teach our students the most critically important knowledge and skills—**we also need to make sure they have learned them.**
It is no longer good enough to push students through the system with Cs and Ds, and then send them off into adult life unprepared to succeed in an entry-level job or a first-year college course.
Every high school diploma awarded by our school will certify readiness for life. Our school is not going to graduate students who are barely literate, who can’t do basic math, or who struggle to write a grammatical sentence.
HOW MIGHT YOU ADD SPECIFICITY?
Standards
Curriculum
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking.
Standards

Curriculum

finish line
the goal
3 inches
a moment
Standards

Curriculum

finish line
3 inches
the goal
a moment

marathon
26 miles
the race
a journey
Curriculum

knowledge
skills
topics
concepts
examples
stories
lessons
units
assignments
projects
readings
materials
videos
research
Demonstrate understanding of how the principles of “checks and balances” and “separation of powers” work in American government.
Learning is like training.
WHAT METAPHORS RING TRUE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?
Four Things You Can Do
King TV
Expedition Videos, Media, and Independent Student Projects

Featured Video: Principal Mike McCarthy Explains King’s Transition to Standards-Based Grading

#2 Proactive Community Briefing
#3 Proactively Define All Terms
11 WAYS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Glossary of Education Reform was created, in part, to help educators communicate more effectively with their communities and stakeholderst. The website currently features 428 terms and more than 110 in-depth entries on many of the most popular and talked-about school-improvement terms, concepts, and strategies in the United States. All of the entries are written for a general audience in non-technical language, and they provide a concise yet detailed introduction to a wide variety of educational topics. In other words, the Glossary is far more than your typical glossary.

To help educators use the Glossary as a school communications tool, we created the following guide. While the recommendations are focused on schools, any educational institution or organization will be able to apply the strategies. If we have overlooked anything, please let us know by submitting your suggestions here.

1. **Link to entries on your website or blog.** If you are explaining a new school-improvement initiative, whether it’s project-based learning or professional learning communities, consider including links to Glossary entries on your website or school blog. Explaining the technical nuances of a new strategy in accessible language can take a lot of time and thought, and it often proves to be trickier than it appears. If our entries are relevant and useful to your school-communications work, let us do some of the work for you. You can link specific terms on your website or direct visitors to our entries if they want to learn more about a particular concept or strategy.

2. **Incorporate entries into social media.** Does your school have a Facebook page? Do you tweet? If so, consider posting or tweeting Glossary entries from time to time as a way to build greater understanding of specific school-improvement initiatives.

3. **Create public documents with Glossary terms.** If you’ve created reports, brochures, newsletters, or other documents with school-improvement terms, consider using the Glossary to help standardize and clarify meanings. By linking to the Glossary, you’ll ensure that your audience understands key terms and concepts.

4. **Use Glossary entries in your reach.** If you have a blog or website, you can use the Glossary to help your audience understand the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives. By linking to the Glossary, you’ll ensure that your audience understands key terms and concepts.

5. **Collaborate with other organizations.** If you work with other organizations, consider sharing the Glossary with them and encouraging them to use it in their communications. This will help ensure that everyone is using the same terms and concepts, which will make it easier for your audience to understand and implement school-improvement initiatives.

6. **Provide on-site training.** If you’re responsible for training educators, incorporate Glossary entries into your training materials. This will help ensure that everyone understands the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives.

7. **Encourage participation in Glossary development.** If you’re part of a school-improvement initiative, consider encouraging participation in the Glossary development process. This will help ensure that the Glossary is relevant and useful to your audience.

8. **Use Glossary entries in your curriculum.** If you’re responsible for curriculum development, consider using Glossary entries in your curriculum. This will help ensure that your students understand the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives.

9. **Provide Glossary resources to parents and community members.** If you’re responsible for communicating with parents and community members, consider providing Glossary resources to help them understand the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives.

10. **Use Glossary entries in your policy-making.** If you’re responsible for policy-making, consider using Glossary entries in your policy-making. This will help ensure that your policies are based on a common understanding of key terms and concepts.

11. **Use Glossary entries in your professional development.** If you’re responsible for professional development, consider using Glossary entries in your professional development. This will help ensure that your educators are using the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives.

By using the Glossary as a school communications tool, you can help ensure that your audience understands the terminology and concepts used in school-improvement initiatives. This will make it easier for your audience to implement these strategies and achieve better results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Honors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>w/ Great Honors</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Summa Cum Laude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8–3.9</td>
<td>w/ High Honors</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Magna Cum Laude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5–3.7</td>
<td>w/ Honors</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Cum Laude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3–3.4</td>
<td>w/ Distinction</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0–3.2</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8–2.9</td>
<td>Mostly Proficient</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5–2.7</td>
<td>Partially Proficient</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0–2.4</td>
<td>Not Proficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#4 Proactive Grade Reporting
# Initial School + Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Values/PBL</th>
<th>Concerns/PBL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Board</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>Values/PBL</td>
<td>Concerns/PBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>student ownership</td>
<td>lack of motivation</td>
<td>multiple ways to demonstrate learning</td>
<td>motivation linked to mastery and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tools + Resources
Getting to PROFICIENCY
Helping Maine Graduate
Every Student Prepared

Getting to Proficiency provides technical assistance, resources and guidance for school districts to implement the proficiency-based diploma, and to do so in a way that promotes student learning and achievement of the Maine Learning Results. Learn More

Education Evolving Maine's Plan for Putting Learners First
Click on the core priorities below to learn more about putting our plan into practice and serving the needs of all learners.

http://maine.gov/doe/proficiency/
Planning for Proficiency-Based Learning

**Policy**
- Engage school board in developing conceptual understanding about proficiency-based learning
- Review existing policies
- Draft new and revised policies
- Collect feedback on draft policies from faculty, staff, students, parents, and local officials
- Refine policies based on feedback
- Adopt new and revised policies

**Practice**
- Establish a district wide proficiency-based committee
- Establish a school wide proficiency-based committee
- Collaboratively develop the conceptual framework with faculty and staff
- Engage faculty and staff in professional development on proficiency-based learning
- Engage faculty in professional development on proficiency-based curriculum design and instruction
- Engage faculty in professional development on assessment literacy
- Develop cross-curricular graduation standards
- Develop content-area graduation standards
- Develop performance indicators for cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards

**Community Engagement**
- Create communications plan for proficiency-based learning
- Develop Record Keeping Process, Transcript, and Report Card
- Develop body-of-evidence assessment process for demonstration of cross-curricular graduation standards
- Develop a process for verifying achievement of content-area standards
- Develop system for reporting on the achievement of student learning
- Engage local media
- Engage students, parents, and the public about proficiency-based learning
- Implement system for reporting on the achievement of student learning.

**Key**
- Policy
- Practice: Graduation Requirements
- Practice: Instructional System
- Community Engagement
Higher Ed Endorsement

http://newenglandssc.org/resources/collegiate-support/

This endorsement recognizes that strong educational preparation benefits our students, our faculty, and our institution, and toward these ends we strongly support proficiency-based teaching practices, assessments, report cards, graduation decisions, and other strategies that can increase student preparation for higher education, modern careers, and lives of active, informed citizenship.

Agreed on this Day
October 24, 2012

Rosa S. Redonnett
Chief Student Affairs Officer
### The Academic Program

The academic program at Merrymeeting High School is designed to motivate and challenge all students, providing an academic experience that is academically rigorous and intended to prepare students for success in college, career, and citizenship. Each course embodies our values of equity, excellence, inclusion, and integrity, allowing students to develop the skills required to succeed as contributing citizens in the 21st century.

#### Highlights of the Academic Program
- **Students** take in-depth courses in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies all four years of high school.
- **Dual-enrollment (early college)** courses are available to all students and completed by 60% of graduates on average.
- **Internships** are available to all students through established school-community partnerships with local businesses and organizations.
- **Advanced Placement courses** in English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Statistics, Calculus, American History, United States Government and Politics, Macroeconomics, Chemistry, and Biology are open to all tenth through twelfth grade students. On average 65% of graduates complete at least one AP course.
- Project-based learning is embedded throughout the curriculum, and most courses engage students in long-term investigative projects, which often address local issues affecting the community.
- **Online courses** are available to all students and reflect the same high academic standards as regular courses. All students must complete at least one online course before graduation.
- **All students** complete a community service requirement before graduating. The Merrymeeting Honors Pledge helps students become ethical and responsible citizens in the school and community.

For more detailed information: merrymeetinghs.org/academic-program

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### Co-Curricular Activities

#### Athletics
- Field hockey | Football | Soccer | Ice hockey | Basketball | Cross country | Alpine and Nordic skiing | Track | Baseball | Softball | Lacrosse

#### Activities
- Drama club | Math team | Robotics team | Student government | Chorus | Concert band | Environmental club | School newspaper | Debate

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### Grading System

The grading system is designed to drive equity and the highest possible learning expectations for students. Our proficiency-based learning system ensures that all students demonstrate proficiency against consistently applied and assessed learning standards, which are documented using a combination of assessments and other indicators of learning.

#### Grading System Metrics
- **1.0**: Does not meet standards
- **2.0**: Partially meets standards
- **3.0**: Meets standards
- **3.25-3.50**: Exceeds standards
- **3.75-4.0**: Exceeds standards with honors

#### Graduation Requirements

- **4.0** courses are required for graduation.
- **2.0** courses are required for college entrance.
- **1.5** courses are required for college entrance with honors.

#### Additional Graduation Requirements

- **Senior Project**
- **Capstone Experience**
- **Service Learning Requirement**

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### Academic Recognition

- **Magna Cum Laude**
- **Senior of the Year**
- **Distinguished Scholar**
- **High Honors**
- **Honors**
- **Semifinalist**
- **Finalist**

#### Grading Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Proficiency</th>
<th>Duration Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 4.0</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 3.75</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 3.50</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 3.25</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 3.00</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 2.00</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 1.00</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Additional Requirements

- **Visual and Performing Arts**
- **World Languages**
- **Science and Technology**
- **Mathematics**
- **English Language Arts**
- **Health Education and Physical Education**
- **Social Studies**
- **Career Education and Development**

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### Sample Academic Report

#### Profile

- **Name**: Jane Doe
- **Principal**: John Doe
- **Address**: 123 School Street, Merry Meeting, Maine 04000
- **Phone**: 207-555-1234
- **Website**: merrymeetinghs.org

#### Transcript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Additional Information

- **Contact**: jane.doe@merrymeetinghs.org
- **Phone**: 207-555-1234
- **Website**: merrymeetinghs.org

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### Mission

Merrymeeting High School is committed to ensuring that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills required to succeed as contributing citizens in the 21st century.

#### The School and the Community

Merrymeeting High School is a regional public high school serving three suburban-rural communities in southern Maine. The student body is composed of typically 1000 students with varied cultural backgrounds, and our community has grown in size and diversity over the past decade. In addition, a growing retirement population has taken on a strong presence and voice in our community and school affairs. Employment opportunities for the parents of Merrymeeting students center on the local hospitality industry, including many new small businesses. A significant percentage of residents commute to Portland, Portland (New Hampshire), and as far as Boston on a daily basis for work. Family incomes vary widely, but most of our students hail from households of modest means. Support for education is balanced on the rise and budgets, while adopted without much opposition, reflect the modest incomes of the region.

For more information: merrymeetinghs.org/our-community
How Does Proficiency-Based Learning Work?

How is it possible that a student can graduate from high school and yet be unable to read or write well, do basic algebra and geometry, identify major countries on a map, understand how our political system works, or explain the scientific method? While it may be difficult to believe, countless students graduate from high schools every year without the fundamental knowledge and skills they will need to earn a college degree, succeed in the modern workplace, or contribute meaningfully to their communities. How is this possible?

The answer is that many schools do not use teaching, testing, grading, and reporting methods that require students to prove they have actually acquired the most critically important knowledge and skills. In fact, high schools give out thousands of grades, report cards, and diplomas every year, but many of them would not be able to tell you what their students have specifically learned or not learned.

Luckily, there’s an alternative option for today’s schools: proficiency-based learning.

How It Works

✓ All students must demonstrate what they have learned before moving on. Before students can pass a course, move on to the next grade level, or graduate, they must demonstrate that they have learned what they were expected to learn. If students fail to meet learning expectations, they are given more support and instruction from teachers, more time to learn and practice, and more opportunities to demonstrate progress. Until they acquire the most essential skills and grasp the most important concepts, students do not move on to the next level.

✓ Teachers are very clear about what students need to learn. In every class, students know precisely what teachers expect—no guesswork required. The learning expectations for the course are clearly described and communicated, and students will know precisely where they stand throughout the course—for example, a student will know that she has achieved three of six expected learning standards, but that she needs to work harder to achieve the last three before she can pass the course. Importantly, her parents will also know precisely what she’s learned and what she may be struggling to learn.

✓ Common, consistent methods are used to evaluate student learning. In many schools, different learning expectations are applied from course to course, and different methods and criteria are used to evaluate what students have learned. Consequently, one Algebra I course in a school may be very challenging, for example, while another Algebra I course may be comparatively easy—and a B earned in the “difficult” course might actually represent stronger learning achievement than an A in the “easy” course. Proficiency-based learning applies the same standards to all students, while teachers use consistent methods of evaluating and reporting on student learning—everyone knows precisely what grades stand for and what each student has learned. As a result, grades mean the same thing from course to course, and schools can certify that students are prepared when they move on.

✓ While learning expectations are fixed, teachers and students have more flexibility. Even though learning expectations and evaluation methods are common and consistent, teachers can be given more flexibility in how they teach and students can be given more choice in how they learn. For example, teachers don’t need to use the same textbooks, assignments, and tests—as long as their students learn what they need to learn, teachers can develop new and more creative ways to teach. Similarly, students can be given an assignment—research an American president, for example—but they can choose which president to study or how they want to show what they’ve learned (one student may write an essay, while others may create a short documentary using archival photos or an audio podcast in the style of a presidential address). As long as students meet the course expectations—demonstrate a strong understanding of the election system, the executive branch of the federal government, and the role of the American president—teachers can teach and students can learn in the ways that work best for them.
What is Proficiency-Based Learning?
QUESTIONS

greatschoolspartnership.org