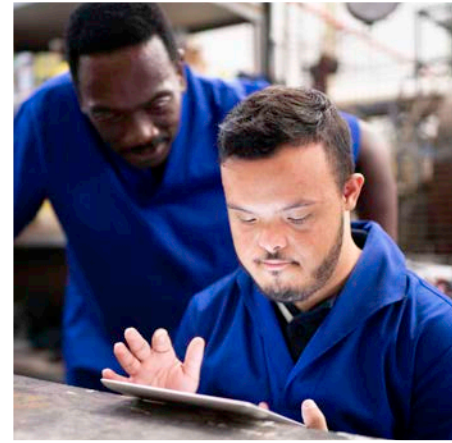




NEW ENGLAND  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
CONSORTIUM



# CREATING EQUITABLE PATHWAYS TO ENSURE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

A report of the New England Secondary School Consortium  
Task Force on Multiple and Flexible Pathways



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Why Pathways Matter</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Framework</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What Are Pathways?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Implementation Strategies by Role</b>	<b>7</b>
• Students and Families	7
• Teachers	8
• Administrators	9
• Partners	11
• Policy Makers	12
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>15</b>
I. State Statute and Guidance	15
II. Resources by Role	16
III. Acknowledgments	18
IV. Task Force Members	19



# Why Pathways Matter

Graduation from high school ushers young people into an increasingly complex and unpredictable world. For these young people to succeed, they need to navigate a rapidly changing workforce, make decisions about colleges that offer more opportunity for ever-increasing cost, and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to be responsible and involved citizens when information is everywhere, yet increasingly unreliable. While some schools and districts have begun to adapt to the reality their students will face after graduation, most look largely as they have for decades: requiring credits for seat time in a core curriculum based on disconnected silos of knowledge that are often revised but rarely reimaged. That paradigm has begun to shift in recent years, however, as employers and colleges alike have continued to call for young people who can do more than rote learning, who have transferable skills in communication, collaboration, and problem solving along with more traditional credentials. States, districts and schools have taken notice and begun to support pathways for learning beyond the traditional classroom, including long-standing career and technical education programs, apprenticeships, internships, work-based learning, and student designed and driven demonstrations of learning.

There are both promising signs of progress in our regional data and persistent disparities among subgroups. As educators across New England have reformed traditional practices, the regional high school dropout rate has decreased from 10.3% in 2010 to 6.2% in 2019, while the regional high school graduation rate has increased by eight percentage points, from 79.6% for the class of 2009 to 87.7% for the class of 2019. At the same time, only 78.7% of economically disadvantaged students, 67.1% of English learners, and 71.6% of students with disabilities graduated. Similarly, in 2019, the four-year graduation rate regionally was 91.2% for White students and 94.3% for Asian and Pacific Islander students, while it was 79.7% for Black students, 76.7% for Hispanic students, 81.2% Native American students, and 86.7% for students who identified as multiracial. For additional data on specific New England states or specific groups of students, see the [New England Secondary School Consortium Common Data Project Annual Report](#).

Increasing student participation in and completion of high quality, rigorous pathways for learning that lead to readiness for college, careers, and civic engagement is, therefore, not only an economic strategy, but an equity strategy. When all students, but in particular our students who have been most underserved, are guaranteed to graduate with skills that transfer across disciplines, experiences and credentials that qualify them for employment in well-paying careers, and the ability to take in and critically examine the vast quantities of competing information available in today's social and political environment, the American promises of social mobility, liberty, and self-actualization may be realized.

This report is designed to assist and guide stakeholders in any role in education in the design and implementation of equitable pathways. It includes strategies to smooth implementation, questions that test for equity, and resources that provide real-world examples and promising practices that can be used as models for any school or district.

*This report is authored by the members of the New England Secondary School Consortium Task Force on Flexible and Multiple Pathways. The NESSC Leads commissioned the Task Force, whose recommendations emerged over the course of meetings taking place between March 2019 and October 2020. While each participating NESSC state education agency is committed to equitable pathways, the recommendations included in this report do not necessarily mean that they have the formal endorsement of the participating agencies.*

# The Framework



The framework above describes five key elements that must be integrated into a system of flexible and multiple pathways across our region in order to realize the goals of civic engagement and college and career readiness for all students. Across New England, states, regions, and schools have implemented these elements to varying degrees. Without weaving all five elements into cohesive state and region-wide systems that work together, these efforts can feel fragmentary and confusing to students and other stakeholders, and may fail to cause the systemic improvements in education they are intended to achieve. Each of these elements form conditions necessary for the successful implementation of pathways that will support all students.

## **Supporting structures**

Pathways for learning must be designed to ensure alignment and opportunity across the continuum of a state’s educational system—including primary and secondary schools; career and technical education, adult education, post-secondary institutions; and workforce partnerships—and result in the skills and knowledge required to succeed in college, careers, and civic engagement. Policy makers at the state and district levels should recognize and attend to friction between various stakeholders: students who need transferable skills, employers who want specific job training, and postsecondary institutions that may look first for traditional academic measures of success.

## **Access**

Pathways should be designed and evaluated based in part on access for students who have been marginalized or historically underserved. We will not improve educational outcomes for these students if barriers to participation, such as transportation and cost, are not identified and eliminated. At the same time, we should not limit access to pathways for students who perform well in traditional educational settings—for instance, by scheduling pathways opposite Advanced Placement classes. Finally, pathway programs should lead to future opportunities, such as well-paying jobs and post-secondary education.

## **Student Choice, Personalization, Engagement, and Support**

Students should be engaged in understanding, selecting, creating, and monitoring pathways for learning, supported in navigating them successfully, and guided flexibly into new pathways based on their needs and interests. Some pathways may be predetermined based on workforce needs and requirements, but others should be designed by or with students. Without student engagement, pathways may become tracks onto which students are shunted with or without their input, reinforcing a system that already limits their options.

## **Workforce and Stakeholder Capacity**

In order for students to succeed in robust, rigorous, and equitable pathways, adults within school systems, intermediary organizations, and workforce partners need to build and foster relationships, create cultures that support student learning and growth, and align expectations, policies, programs, and resources. Leaders responsible for managing pathways must be able to build relationships with community partners, enable communication between students and those partners, and train both students and partners in working together to improve student learning outcomes and ensure positive experiences for all stakeholders.

## **Equitable Outcomes**

Our schools and systems do not prepare all students for success in their lives and careers, particularly students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and those who live in poverty. Well-designed pathways systems are an equity strategy—a strategy to ensure that all students are ready for the futures of their choosing—and therefore must provide students access to rigorous learning opportunities aligned to state standards and local graduation expectations. They must be culturally responsive and driven by student interest. It is not enough to provide students with access to learning pathways; we have to ensure all pathways lead to readiness, and that they are accessible to all students. This requires the regular review and examination of data, as well as its public reporting. Any and all racial, gender, and socio-economic disparities revealed in the review and examination of the data must be reflected on and redressed.






# What Are Pathways?

New England educators have long recognized the value of designing pathways for learning that meet the needs and interests of their students. Every New England state has embraced the notion of personalization, and state education agencies, together with policymakers, have attempted to encourage and guide the development of pathways for students. While each state characterizes pathways in slightly different ways, across the region, three common features emerge:

- Pathways should be intentional and coordinated
- Pathways should be aligned to student interests and supported by guidance from adults
- Pathways should lead to college, career, and citizenship readiness

To better understand how states characterize pathways and how they might differ from one another, please read the summaries below as well as the associated resources in the appendices, which expand on and provide more detail.

State	What are Pathways?
<p><b>CONNECTICUT</b></p> 	<p>A learning pathway is a coordinated program of rigorous, high-quality education and work-related training that advances students in their life-long career(s) of choice. Pathways are seamless and include multiple possibilities leading to an industry-recognized credential that may be credit bearing, certificate or licensure, and/or an associate or baccalaureate degree and beyond.</p>
<p><b>MAINE</b></p> 	<p>The Maine task force team sees pathways as a student-driven, guided process toward additional educational movement - credentials of value, college, career, and citizenship readiness. They see all pathways as equal and recognize the necessity for all pathways to be flexible with students able to seamlessly navigate among and between them. All pathways support students in their future planning and these types of pathways systems necessitate a culture of support and collaboration across the entire system - in schools, communities, classrooms, business and industry, within and among students and teachers.</p>
<p><b>MASSACHUSETTS</b></p> 	<p>A pathway is an intentional educational structure within a school system which includes a rigorous academic course of study, authentic contextual learning experiences, caring adults to provide guidance and advising, and social, emotional and learning supports designed to prepare students for college and career. To be considered a pathway, the structure should adhere to the five Guiding Principles identified by the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education: Equitable Access, Guided Academic Pathways, Enhanced Student Support, Connection to Career, and Effective Partnerships.</p>

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**



New Hampshire has developed a framework for school districts to develop career pathway systems that balance local opportunities and programs of study, as well as industry recognized credentials while striving towards equity and access despite zip code.

A career pathway system is defined by Senate Bill 276 as a high quality education system that spans secondary and postsecondary education, blending rigorous core academic and career instruction, offering focused career guidance and advisement systems including high-quality work-based learning experiences, to significantly expand access to, participation in, and successful completion of those pathways, culminating in postsecondary or industry credentials, licensure, and career-related technical skills.

**RHODE ISLAND**



A pathway is a rigorous educational opportunity for learners that integrates real-world learning experiences, and supports learners reaching their academic, career, and life goals. Career pathways include, for example, career and technical preparation programs, online and blended learning, internships and apprenticeships, and technical training and work-site experiences.

**VERMONT**



Flexible Pathways are any combination of high-quality expanded learning opportunities, including academic and experiential components, which build and assess attainment of identified proficiencies and lead to secondary school completion, civic engagement and postsecondary readiness.





# Implementation Strategies by Role

Pathway programs often arise in silos. A state agency creates a pathway into the workforce that emphasizes industry credentials. A district revises its graduation requirements to include transferable skills that cut across content areas. A CTE center offers students the opportunity to gain content credit outside of traditional classrooms. A student asks to count an internship towards a graduation requirement. All of these examples reveal stakeholders who care about changing our educational paradigm in service of students, and all of them work to solve a problem in isolation from other stakeholders.

The following sections are intended to name strategies—and equity questions—specific to common roles in education: students and families, teachers, partners, administrators, and policymakers. It is essential to remember, however, that pathways cannot produce equitable, powerful learning outcomes for all students unless stakeholders break down silos and collaborate to create a robust, transferable, and transformative system that works for everyone.

## STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

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Effective pathway programs prepare students for the current needs of the workforce, strengthen local economies, and improve equitable outcomes for all learners; but for these programs to be effective, they must meet the emotional and academic needs of young people trying to find their place in the world. For some students, that means gaining a four-year college degree. For others, it means pursuing credentials that allow them to access higher-paying, in-demand jobs. For many, it means engaging their interests and passions in a way that will help them graduate with a high school diploma that represents rigorous learning.

Unfortunately, effective pathway programs are not available to all students. Schools may determine which students are eligible for certain pathways without consulting them, limit access to information about pathways that aren't deemed appropriate, or shunt students into less rigorous tracks for the purpose of credit recovery. As a result, when pathways are available, many students and their families learn to view them as alternatives to traditional education—that is, for some, but certainly not all, students. Changing this mindset requires effective communication to inform students and their families about the benefits of pathways, including students in co-creating and personalizing learning, and ensuring that pathways target the needs of all students.

**By students and families, we mean:** All students and the adults who support them.

### Strategies

1. Identify and meet with the main point of contact for pathways in your school, whether that person is a pathways coordinator, teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor, to be sure you understand what pathways are available to you, how they relate to graduation requirements, and how they relate to the world outside of school.
2. Find an adult in the building who can advocate for you. Don't be deterred if you encounter initial roadblocks to joining pathways. If you encounter any, your ally can advocate for removing those barriers, including things like scheduling conflicts, unanticipated expenses, or transportation challenges that might prevent you from taking advantage of opportunities outside of school.

3. Understand the requirements of the pathway you've joined. For instance, some pathways might require you to make and keep a personalized learning plan or develop a portfolio that demonstrates your learning over time. If you aren't sure you understand those requirements, ask an adult ally in your building.
4. Know that individualized education plans (IEPs) and other required educational supports should follow you or your student into pathways of their choice.
5. Share your own positive stories of your learning in pathways with friends and family. Spread the word so that other people know how pathways can impact their education!

### Equity Check

- ✓ Do I know where to go to find out what pathways are available to me and what the process is for applying for those pathways?
- ✓ Do I have an ally to go to to report or resolve roadblocks and challenges?
- ✓ Does my school or district have support in place for me to pursue pathways for learning, including advisory systems, clear guidance about accessing opportunities, transportation services, and support for special needs?
- ✓ How will the different pathways at my school set me up for a better future?
- ✓ Are the learning outcomes of pathways clear and challenging enough for me?
- ✓ Does each pathway align with quality work and life opportunities in my future?
- ✓ Do pathways at my school force me into learning tracks, or do they support personalization and flexibility? For instance, if I join a career and technical education pathway, does the schedule force me into less challenging courses?
- ✓ Do traditional course and credit requirements make it difficult for me to do anything other than take those courses in order to graduate?
- ✓ Has the program given me what I need so that I can feel successful?
- ✓ Does participating in this program cause additional strains or challenges for my family? For instance, do I have to pay to participate or provide my own transportation?

## TEACHERS

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Teachers and other educators are critical to the success of pathways. When teachers personalize learning in their own classrooms, students learn to show what they know in many different ways. When teachers support and encourage education that moves beyond a traditional curriculum and work with students to connect their learning to critically advanced and durable skills, students learn to think about their own education differently. They learn to demonstrate and justify learning both within and outside of a single classroom. When teachers are involved with community and workforce partners, they can support those partners in working with students to help them grow as learners and as people. When teachers are involved in evaluating pathways, they can ensure that those pathways do more than recover academic credits or prepare students for low-end or transitory jobs.

**By teachers, we mean:** School teaching staff, career and technical education instructors, para-professionals, school counselors, and school staff who interact with and support students in various ways.

## Strategies

1. Model flexibility and personalization in your own classroom. When students learn to demonstrate and justify complex learning in multiple ways, they are better positioned for greater independence in pathways.
2. Advocate for time in the school schedule for educators to approve, support, and evaluate student demonstrations of learning outside the classroom. Teachers will play a major role in ensuring that pathways are rigorous, accessible, and equitable and those responsibilities should be valued in teacher assignments.
3. Help students tie their learning back to course standards, but be flexible about content. Requiring pathways to include content identical to courses essentially eliminates or restricts access to pathways.
4. In your role as an advisor, help students understand the range of available pathways (career and technical education programs, internships, apprenticeships, work-based learning, self-designed learning, etc.) and how to learn more about them.
5. Align career certification and licensure standards from career and technical education pathways with academic graduation requirements.
6. Ensure that the needs of students with special needs and English learners are addressed in pathways.

## Equity Check

- ✓ To what extent do pathways available to students in my school reinforce tracking? For instance, are students funneled from low-level courses into career and technical programs, or do pathways outside of these programs exist mostly for credit recovery?
- ✓ What data do I use, beyond graduation rates, to evaluate the learning outcomes of pathways and ensure that students graduate with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed after high school?
- ✓ Does school and district leadership support me in holding students accountable to rigorous learning outcomes?
- ✓ Do accommodations for students with special needs and English learners follow them into pathways programs?

## ADMINISTRATORS

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Administrators and building leaders play a crucial role in ensuring pathways for students in their schools and overseeing and reinforcing connections between the student learning outcomes required by the school and any pathways students might pursue. A superintendent who advocates for funding across a broad array of pathways and seeks formal agreements with colleges and businesses will enhance opportunities for students. A principal who believes and requires that pathways demonstrate rigorous learning by students will cultivate that mindset in staff. A pathways coordinator who works to connect students to outside partners and supports those partners in understanding how to help young people develop important skills will create buy-in from all stakeholders. A career and technical director who seeks to meet the job training requirements of the workforce while also supporting the development of skills that transfer across careers and

academics will demonstrate the value of pathways to the community. If administrators do not hold and protect a unified and cohesive vision of pathways for their students, no one else can.

**By administrators, we mean:** Superintendents and assistant superintendents, curriculum leaders at the district and school levels, principals and assistant principals, career and technical center directors, guidance directors, and pathway coordinators.

## Strategies

1. Include all stakeholders in clarifying rigorous and transferable learning outcomes for schools. If these outcomes are in place, they can be implemented directly in pathways. For example, if stakeholders define a set of five transferable skills that cut across all classrooms and pathways, those standards can help define the learning outcomes of any pathway.
2. Examine district policies, school practices, and graduation requirements to identify and create supports while minimizing barriers to pursuing pathways.
3. Include all stakeholders in creating a process for students to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways.
4. Create a position within your school or district to formalize pathways, communicate across school-based and career and technical education pathways, and work with students and community partners to ensure success.
5. Include time in teachers' assignments to work with students and evaluate their progress toward learning goals.
6. Implement a system that enables students to identify the learning they want to do, plan and organize their work, and share the story of their learning. This system may include personalized or individualized learning plans, but these plans must grow from students' interests and experiences rather than from state or district mandates.
7. With a leadership team, identify and analyze data to ensure that student outcomes are equitable and rigorous.
8. Monitor the implementation of pathways programs and ensure students and partners have the support to reflect, rethink, and adjust pathways as needed.
9. Cultivate and celebrate student successes and share examples of students who have had compelling pathways experiences to stakeholders in the school and community.
10. Enter into formal agreements or memorandums of understanding with local businesses for internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences, and with colleges and universities for Early College opportunities. Adopt, through Board approval, a policy of advocacy and procedures to ensure equitable access for students.

## Equity Check

- ✓ To what extent does your pathway data suggest de facto tracking? Are traditionally marginalized students--people of color, students with economic disadvantages, or those who are differently-abled, among others--placed in less rigorous pathways?
- ✓ To what extent is your pathway system, outside of career and technical education programs, based on credit-recovery or work completion, rather than demonstrations of deep learning? Does your pathway system invite students to move towards a future of their choice, or only away from traditional high school requirements?

- ✓ Does your pathway system reflect your vision and mission?
- ✓ Is there evidence that students use pathways to do less, or less rigorous, work?
- ✓ Do students begin, but fail to complete, pathways?
- ✓ Are some students unable to access pathways because of additional burdens on families, like cost, uniform requirements, or transportation?
- ✓ What supports are in place that provide students with opportunities to explore pathways that interest them and help them change pathways when necessary?

## **PARTNERS**

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At the heart of many pathway programs is a collaboration between the student, the school, and external partners. Local businesses host and mentor interns and apprentices. Institutions of higher education design, align, and select courses for secondary students. Workforce intermediary organizations build relationships between schools, employers, and other local partners and train them to work together towards skill development, certification, and employment. College intermediary organizations, such as Upward Bound, support student understanding of and access to higher-education options. Community organizations bring cultural expertise and civic engagement to partner with students on real-world projects. Partners like these are essential to ensuring all students have access to and are supported in their completion of pathways. Without them, students may lack the real-world experiences that bring their learning to life.

### **By partners, we mean:**

Employers, colleges and universities, local organizations and nonprofits, intermediaries that support and connect schools, the workforce, and advocacy groups.

### **Strategies**

1. Host students for internships, apprenticeships, and other forms of work-based learning.
2. Work with schools and intermediary organizations to create systems for students to demonstrate their learning and reflect on and grow from feedback.
3. Align industry certification requirements with school standards and transferable skills.
4. Participate in evaluating student learning and performance.
5. Train workforce partners in working with students to develop appropriate skills and meet workplace standards.
6. Design early college experiences that align with student pathways, and ensure that credits transfer throughout state post secondary systems and apply to possible majors (colleges and universities).
7. Offer courses that align with high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations.
8. Provide supports and resources that meet students where they are and help them navigate pathways and develop skills needed to succeed in college or careers.
9. Work with high school teachers to provide academic, administrative, and student services that foster the smooth transition from secondary to post-secondary institutions.

10. Build school schedules and policies that enable student participation in pathway opportunities.

### Equity Check

- ✓ In what ways is the culture of the workforce in conflict with the culture and needs of schools? What can I do to recognize and address these differences systemically for the success of all of our students?
- ✓ Is my organization culturally responsive, or does it privilege working with some students over others?
- ✓ To what extent do conflicts between workplace standards and school standards prevent students from participating in pathways?
- ✓ What data might we collect on student performance in pathways to evaluate their effectiveness at meeting both workplace and school needs?
- ✓ To what extent do the skills and knowledge students develop in career and technical education apply only to a narrow range of careers?
- ✓ Are we excluding certain students in the ways we advertise and recruit?
- ✓ Are students able to make informed decisions when selecting college credit courses while in high school? In other words, do educators help them understand how college credits might—or might not—transfer to different pathways, certification programs, and majors?

## POLICYMAKERS

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Policymakers—including governors, legislators, state board members, state education agency leaders, and local school board members, along with policy influencers like representatives of nonprofit policy support organizations—need a unified, aligned vision of pathways for learning to guide the creation of policies and procedures at the state, district, and school level. These policies must clear barriers to student participation, align student outcomes and stakeholder needs, and provide resources to ensure that all students have access and can succeed. But policies alone are not sufficient. In order for them to have impact, policies at all levels of state educational systems must be aligned with each other according to the vision for pathways. For instance, when policy calls for learning experiences outside of the classroom but district graduation requirements include rigid, credit-based sets of course requirements, students will find that any pathway they choose will somehow have to fit the content requirements or seat time of specific courses. In rural areas, pathways might be encouraged, but funding for transportation anywhere except to school or a regional career and technical education center might be difficult. In urban areas, labor and education departments might have competing internship and apprenticeship programs. Across districts and states, students who move from one school to another may find that their pathway experiences are not recognized academically in their new school. In all of these examples, underfunded schools may struggle to staff positions that make pathways possible, leaving their success dependent on individual staff members and ad-hoc groups of teachers, administrators, and students. Well-crafted, aligned policies and procedures can help overcome barriers, incentivize successes, and smooth the way for pathways.

### By policymakers, we mean:

State delegations of elected members of Congress and their education policy advisors; elected representatives, especially those serving on state legislative committees that oversee education, as

well as those elected or appointed to their state's respective governing boards of education (Pre-K-12 and higher education); the chief state school officer (e.g. commissioner, secretary, or state superintendent of education) and their state agency division or program leaders; the governor's education policy and workforce development advisors; and nonprofit organizations that work to translate and support the implementation of policy; at the school district level, school boards or school committees and state school board associations.

## Strategies

1. Adopt state statutes, rules, and guidance that support personalized learning and multiple, flexible pathways for learning and graduation.
2. Identify and align existing laws and rules that might be out of alignment with new policy regarding flexible and multiple pathways.
3. Use state funding systems—and the use of federal and philanthropic grants—to incentivize the creation of pathways, particularly for students from underrepresented groups.
4. Align and coordinate pathway programs across state government so that different branches do not compete for partners and resources.
5. Ensure that school accountability measures align with and encourage access to pathway programs in districts.
6. Support professional organizations, like school board and principals associations, in aligning local requirements with state statutes, rules, and guidance.
7. Enact local graduation requirements and processes that support, rather than limit, personalized learning.

## Equity Check

- ✓ Do the schools in your state with the fewest resources have the most limited access to pathways?
- ✓ Do existing funding mechanisms create inequities in the ways that schools can implement flexible and multiple pathways?
- ✓ Do state and local graduation requirements make it hard for students to use learning outside of the classroom to meet those requirements?
- ✓ How do districts and the state report access, progress, performance, and completion of students in pathways? How are they illustrating gaps among groups of students, if they exist?
- ✓ What data will help us understand the ways in which pathways are or are not producing more equitable outcomes for students?
- ✓ Do existing state or local statutes and policies related to flexible and multiple pathways ignore or establish barriers to participation for certain student groups and populations?
- ✓ As policies descend in grain size (from state to local) are there unintended outcomes for schools with fewer resources in terms of turning policy into practice?



# CONCLUSION

Across New England, education leaders have expanded the options available to students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be engaged citizens, and to succeed in post-secondary education and careers. The challenge for our region is to bring successful approaches to scale so that all students, regardless of where they attend school, have access to high-quality pathways that enlarge their sense of what is possible. In particular, we must explicitly protect and support students who have been underserved and underrepresented in many aspects of their lives; otherwise, pathways will serve only to reinforce their disenfranchisement. As we broaden the definition of education beyond success in purely an academic sense, we can hope to move closer to the long-deferred dream of educational equity.



# Appendix I. State Statute and Guidance

## Connecticut

- See [General Statutes of Connecticut Chapter 170 Sec. 10-221a\(g\)](#) for statutory language related to graduation through demonstrations of mastery.
- See Connecticut State Department of Education report [Today's Skills, Tomorrow's Careers: Career Clusters, Career Pathways, Sample Occupations, and Programs of Study](#) for Connecticut state guidance related to career development pathways with sample courses.

## Maine

- See [Maine Revised Statutes Title 20-A, §4703: Instruction for Individual Students](#) for statutory language related to different types of pathways.

## Massachusetts

- See [Career/Vocational Technical Education](#), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website linking to career and technical education.
- See [Massachusetts High Quality College and Career Pathways Initiative](#), a page linking to state statute and guidance for creating two types of pathways: one with an early college focus, and the other with a career focus.

## New Hampshire

- See [Senate Bill 276 - Career Readiness Drive to 65 Act](#) for statutory language related to career and technical education and career credentials.
- See [Technical Assistance Document SB 276: The Drive to 65 Act](#) for technical assistance and interpretation of SB 276 by the Alliance for College and Career Readiness.
- See [65 By 25 Achieving Economic Prosperity Through Post-Secondary Education](#), A white paper that uses student data to argue for the importance of post-secondary education and credentials.
- See [New Hampshire Minimum Standards for Public Schools](#) for statutory language related to administrator and school board duties, as well as graduation requirements.

## Rhode Island

- See the [Office of College and Career Readiness](#) for the Rhode Island Department of Education's links to guidance related to pathways.

## Vermont

- See [Act 77 of 2013](#) for the original statutory language about flexible pathways to graduation.
- See the [Flexible Pathways](#) page on the State of Vermont Agency of Education website for additional information and resources.

# Appendix II. Resources by Role

## Students and Families

- [Flexible Pathways to Graduation: Six Vermont High School Students](#) - A video that explores the experiences of six Vermont students with different types of flexible pathways.
- [Extended Learning Opportunities](#) - A resource from Reaching Higher NH that describes extended learning opportunities and includes a video of students describing their learning experiences outside of classrooms.
- [Big Picture Learning](#) - Videos of students describing their experiences with personalized learning.

## Teachers

- [10 Expectations](#) - A video and links to the ten core expectations in Big Picture Learning schools.
- [One Student at a Time](#) - A resource from the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center in Providence, Rhode Island, that describes the process for personalizing learning with students.
- [Nexus](#) - A personalized learning program at Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg, Vermont.

## Administrators

- [Extended Learning Opportunities Program: Winnacunnet High School](#) - The landing page for Winnacunnet High School's Extended Learning Opportunities program in Hampton, New Hampshire.
- [Learning Outside the Classroom: Launching, Improving, and Sustaining High School Internship Programs](#) - A presentation from the Aurora Institute related to internship programs at the high school level.
- [Nokomis Regional High School Internship Handbook](#) - A process for selecting, participating in, and sharing learning from Nokomis Regional High School in Newport, Maine.
- [What Are Flexible Pathways for Learning?](#) - A resource from the Connecticut Department of Education that describes flexible pathways, including a design guide.
- [VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway](#) - A complete toolkit for facilitating student participation in flexible pathways.

## Partners

- [Boston Private Industry Council](#) - A nonprofit organization that brings together employers, educators, and workforce organizations to help guide students toward careers and reconnect disconnected youth to education.
- [Prepare Rhode Island](#) - A initiative between the Rhode Island government, private industry leaders, the public education system, universities, and nonprofits across Rhode Island to prepare students for in-demand careers.

- [The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students](#) - A resource that provides guidance and spotlights programs across the country that have made progress in using dual-enrollment strategies to improve equitable outcomes for students.

## **Policymakers**

- [50 State Comparison: Education and Workforce Development Connections](#) - A comparison of state workforce development models by the Education Commission of the States, including links to metrics and policy recommendations.
- [A Promise for Equitable Futures: Enabling Systems Change to Scale Educational and Economic Mobility Pathways](#) - A call to action from the Aurora Institute that “every learner will have access and support to pursue a certified pathway with system-wide opportunities that guarantee entry into a meaningful, chosen career that will build social and economic capital over the course of their lives.”
- [Apprenticeship and Educational Pathways Map](#) - A flowchart developed by the Connecticut Department of Labor that shows pathways to a degree.
- [Career Readiness and Workforce Development](#) - A brief from the Aspen Institute that describes important considerations for state policymakers who wish to improve students’ workforce readiness. It includes guiding questions for state leaders, promising practices, supporting research, and a glossary of terms.
- [Vermont Agency of Education: Flexible Pathways](#) - The landing page for Vermont’s flexible pathways resources, including a toolkit for establishing pathways and links to specific types of pathways, such as work-based and personalized learning.

# Appendix III. Acknowledgements

The New England Secondary School Consortium would like to thank the members of the task force for sharing their time, expertise, and deep thinking with each other through an extraordinarily challenging time. As the Covid-19 pandemic has forced educators across the country to change the ways they think about student learning almost overnight, the importance of providing multiple pathways for learning has never been more obvious, and the need for educators who are adept at providing those pathways more stark.

Lisa Harney, and Beth Lambert - from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Maine Department of Education, respectively - served as co-chairs of this task force. Their thoughtful leadership set the foundation for the work of the task force and the creation of this report. We are deeply grateful for everything they have brought to this process.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of the people and organizations that made it possible for the members of the task force to participate in this process over the last several months and to the team at the Great Schools Partnership for their convening and facilitation of this task force. This report would not have been possible without the support of our funders, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

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The New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) is a regional partnership of state education agencies, leaders, and educators that promotes forward-thinking innovations in the design and delivery of secondary education across New England. All six New England states—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—work together to close persistent achievement gaps and promote greater educational equity and opportunity for all students.

The NESSC is coordinated by the Great Schools Partnership. This report was supported by a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

