

# Case Study No. 14

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

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## Accountability's New Frontier: Innovation From the States

by KATHLEEN CARROLL

APRIL 2016

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Discipline & Focus	Knowledge	Resources Linked to Results	Effective Grantees	Engaged Partners	Leverage, influence & Collaboration	Persistence	Innovation & Constant Learning
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Grantmakers for Education's mission is to strengthen philanthropy's capacity to improve educational outcomes for all learners. We achieve this mission by:

1. Sharing successful strategies, effective practices and lessons that exemplify responsive and responsible grantmaking in education.
2. Creating venues for funders to build and share knowledge, debate strategies, develop leadership, collaborate and advocate for change.
3. Gathering and interpreting data to illustrate trends, highlight innovative or proven educational approaches and support informed grantmaking.

Grantmakers for Education developed its series of case studies on effective education grantmaking as reflection and discussion tools. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of successful or unsuccessful grantmaking. In addition, to help make the case a more effective learning tool, it is deliberately written from one foundation's point of view, even though other foundations may have been involved in similar activities or supported the same grantees.

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## INTRODUCTION

The recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) is an historic opportunity for education leaders and funders to think broadly about innovation in terms of goals and accountability.

Two major features of the law make this an important moment for funders. First, it empowers states to take control of most decision-making, from setting goals to developing measures and reporting results. Second, while ESSA retains key components such as regular assessment and disaggregated data reporting set by its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB),<sup>1</sup> it also provides greater coherence in terms of connecting standards to college- and career-readiness skills and includes non-academic skills as key elements of student success. In this regard, ESSA follows widespread adoption by states of new, rigorous academic standards designed to support the critical thinking and the analytic skills considered essential for the workplaces of the future.<sup>2</sup>

Taken together, it amounts to an opportunity for states to redesign and implement systems that nurture “deeper learning”<sup>3</sup>—including by resetting the content and structure of school accountability systems.

*“Perhaps the most seismic result of the new law will be state revisions of their accountability systems. And, given the demands of the global economy and modern civic life, getting accountability innovation right is a major, and timely, issue—states must seize the chance to ensure all kids get beyond the ‘3 Rs’ to acquire the more robust knowledge, skills, and learning mindsets they’ll need to succeed.”*

*-From “Accountability and Innovation,” by Barbara Chow and Christopher Shearer published December 10, 2015, on the Work in Progress blog<sup>4</sup>*

This case examines two examples of states where responsible innovation regarding goals and accountability is long underway, with the support of philanthropic partners. It also serves as a caution about the need to retain—and enhance—an emphasis on equity, encouraging thoughtful consideration of the opportunities and potential threats ESSA may pose.

In New Hampshire, the state education department, front-running school districts and advocates have worked to develop and implement a strong competency-based model for student achievement, including performance-based assessments. A regional funder has chiefly supported this work, though other foundations have been involved.

In Kentucky, state officials have implemented college- and career-ready standards for student success, through intentional efforts that include keeping the public informed and developing and implementing new teaching tools in collaboration with experts in and outside the state, with the support of a local nonprofit and a national funder.

Both states’ experiences raise several questions for readers as they consider the opportunity ESSA poses for their organization in their target area of expertise or region:

- Are there specific guardrails that are important in education accountability, and why?
- What are the universal opportunities posed by ESSA that didn't exist before?
- What are the specific opportunities that exist in the region or state you support?
- What are the policy or implementation challenges states expect to face, and what can your organization do to help address them?
- How can ESSA improve equitable inputs and outcomes?

## INNOVATING TOWARD COMPETENCY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Growing up in the 1960s, Fred Bramante and the schools he attended were not an immediate match. As he tells it, it was only after graduation that he found his footing, and became a teacher, then a successful entrepreneur, and eventually, chairman of the New Hampshire Board of Education.

“School taught me that I wasn’t very bright,” he said during a presentation on competency-based learning to educators and entrepreneurs back in 2014. “Life taught me that they were wrong.”<sup>5</sup>

It’s one of many stories that inspired New Hampshire’s move to require high schools to award credit based on competency rather than seat time. New Hampshire was the first state to do away with the Carnegie unit<sup>6</sup> in 2005, and is now pushing a second wave of innovation forward: performance-based assessments of student learning.

### A History of Innovation

New Hampshire has a long local history of experimentation with competency-based learning, which first appeared in the state nearly two decades ago. In the mid-1990s, the state’s Business and Industry Association raised concerns about high school graduates’ readiness for college and career, and education officials drew on research and experiments overseas to draft a local approach.

An initial pilot of four schools in 1997 grew to 30 schools by 2003, funded by the federal School to Work Opportunities Act<sup>7</sup> and developed in collaboration with Jobs for the Future.<sup>8</sup> State education officials opted to roll out the initial pilot in afterschool programs at first—a lower-stakes environment that would capitalize on the department’s commitment to extended learning opportunities, including out-of-school learning, and, importantly, would not run afoul of teachers’ collective-bargaining agreements.

This vision of competency-based standards holds:

*“Students move ahead based primarily on demonstrating key learning milestones along the path to mastery of core competencies and bodies of knowledge (as defined in deeper learning). Tasks and learning units might be either individual or collective; and students have multiple means and opportunities to demonstrate mastery through performance-based and other assessments. Each student is assured of the scaffolding and differentiated support needed to keep progressing*

*at a pace appropriate to reaching college and career and civic outcomes, even when unequal resources are required to achieve a more equitable result.”*

- From “Putting Students at the Center,” published by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation<sup>9</sup>

The competency work inspired core pieces of the state’s subsequent high-school redesign plan, developed in 2004.<sup>10</sup> The next year, with some evidence of success and after a few plainspoken questions by Bramante during a public meeting, the state Board of Education voted to abolish the Carnegie unit.<sup>11</sup> Starting with the 2008-09 school year, academic credit in New Hampshire high schools would be awarded based on students reaching a particular level of competency, not simply attending school for a particular number of hours. The hope was that, eventually, such standards would allow students across the state to move through school and earn academic credit at their own pace and in diverse settings, including through internships, online courses, community service projects and independent study.

## A Bottom-Up Approach

Abolishing the Carnegie unit revealed both the relative strength and weakness of the New Hampshire Board of Education’s position. On one hand, the state board was vested with the power to transform policy solely through regulation, without waiting for the Legislature to pass a new law. However, New Hampshire is the “Live Free or Die” state—and its education department has limited power to direct school districts’ activities. Any efforts to exert itself strongly meet predictable and strong pushback.

“The policy change was significant, but given a strong ethos of local control, the districts had broad discretion about how to respond and comply,” said Nicholas Donohue, the then-New Hampshire Commissioner of Education and current president and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. “The realities of our authority meant that some people were going to respond by saying they were attending to the change by doing largely what they had already been doing.”

That meant that, when the new standards came online in 2008-09, districts engaged with them at their own pace. Those that saw an immediate need to move toward competency—and had the will and capacity to make changes—could develop innovations that served a local need, without bureaucratic limits. Those that wanted to experiment with a slow-motion soft launch could do that, too. And those that wanted to continue teaching and measuring learning just as they had before were free to keep seat-time requirements, even by rebranding them as a means to achieve “competency.”

This way forward differed significantly from a typical state model and called for a different type of leadership from the state.

“In the United States, we are famous for making policy changes before we know what the right policies are, and we suffer from expecting universal progress from districts with wildly different capacity,” said Donohue. “The reality is that policy should be developed based on some experimentation with practice. You can’t guess what’s going to help, and it doesn’t help to tell people to just do things differently.”

It turned out that the most important factor in making these sorts of changes was local commitment and widespread buy-in among district leaders, teachers and the community. So supporting competency meant convincing educators that it was a smart innovation, one that was possible to implement and would prepare students more effectively than traditional standards did. Accordingly, New Hampshire leaders led meetings to share tools and strategies with local educators across the state. They catalogued efforts and shared them during regular meetings with local superintendents. They looked for opportunities to inspire district leaders with the potential for fully implemented competency practices to engage students, particularly those hardest to reach.

New Hampshire became a laboratory for competency standards, with pockets of success and a good deal of experimentation. Still, progress was somewhat uneven across the board, and the state needed to marry up its competency standards with accountability rules or risk sidelining them in the long-term. Complicating matters, although one federal law had jump-started New Hampshire's competency work in the 1990s, another one slowed its growth in the 2000s.

"The state and federal accountability system based on No Child Left Behind didn't support competency-based, student-centered models," said Deputy Commissioner of Education Paul Leather. "It was really more about a cohort, based in age, moving along at an expected pace regardless of where an individual student might be."

That left less room for activities that weren't oriented toward low-level, multiple choice standardized tests. How could New Hampshire pursue its competency agenda without running afoul of the law?

"We started thinking deeply about what a new assessment and accountability system might look like, where we could—through a balanced system of assessments—both assess student learning and improve educational opportunities, and validate student learning as students reached mastery to accelerate learning over time," Leather said. And they began to explore those questions, with funder support.

## **Exploring Assessment, With Support**

Foundation support for New Hampshire's efforts had already begun, but expanded in earnest in 2010, including critical, ongoing support through a series of grants by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, a regional funder based in Quincy, Mass.<sup>12</sup> Nellie Mae supported ongoing efforts to create a competency-based program at Newfound Regional High School in Bristol, through a series of grants to the Asia Society totaling \$275,000 to date. The Asia Society has helped to develop and implement the competency-based program, including by creating professional development and curriculum materials for its International Studies Schools Network.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, Nellie Mae invested directly in public schools in Pittsfield, through \$2.7 million to date in grants to the district and to fund a community group aimed at engaging stakeholders and promoting a competency-based school improvement agenda. It has also supported competency work in New Hampshire through grants to the Council of Chief State School Officers, through the Innovation Lab Network.<sup>14</sup> Sparking

experimentation is part of the goal. A developmental theory of action, Donohue said, relies on forward-thinking actors who step out in front, not incremental improvement for all, across the board.

“You have the front runners, the people you start with who are a little readier,” said Donohue. “And then you translate the processes that work for early adopters, and make it work for later adopters. You have to give the adopters protocols and tools to translate goals into something relatable. That is how the world works, and that’s how creative entrepreneurs do their jobs. They iterate until they have something the rest of us can pick up. We don’t make everybody step forward in the same way at the same time.”

### **A Shorter-Term Strategy**

In 2010 and 2011, Nellie Mae made three direct investments totaling \$450,000 to the New Hampshire Department of Education, to support efforts to train interested educators and develop assessments for competency-based standards. Nellie Mae has generally made a series of shorter-term grants of one year or so to support efforts in New Hampshire, rather than multi-year funding commitments, said Charlie Toulmin, director of policy.

“I think particularly when you are talking about direct grants to state education agencies to work on policy or to work on broader state-level change, a benefit of shorter-term grants is that you can be more nimble in responding to changing political circumstances,” he said. “If a commissioner leaves, if a governor doesn’t get re-elected and a commissioner either changes or is forced by others to change direction, or if a legislature turns over and is able to turn back the momentum, you can respond.”

That strategy “wasn’t all planned out in the beginning,” he said. “We didn’t sit down by ourselves or with key leaders at the New Hampshire Department of Education and plan out the next five or six years,” he said. “I think we’ve tried to be adaptive and responsive to their needs as they have become clear. . . (But) we have tended not to give out a lot of multi-year funding commitments. So with New Hampshire, in terms of the actual grants, we’ve gone year by year even when it is clear another ask will be coming.”

Donohue acknowledged that such short-term grants could be frustrating for grantees, because they are continually re-applying for support. However, with shorter terms, “we press people to be reflective and adaptive more immediately than people in a school are used to. Reflecting over the summer after a year isn’t a fast enough cycle.” The relationship that grantmakers and grantees build together over those many terms is critical to establishing ongoing support—especially when entering hard-to-predict arenas like experimental pilots or policy-related battles.

“A lot of times grantmakers like to think of themselves as partners, but they forget that the leverage is much stronger on their side,” said Donohue. “On the other hand, grantmaking in systems change can’t be a one-way directive. It’s really about trying to establish candor and communication rather than having a crisp, criteria-based transaction. There’s got to be more judgment and a relationship involved than just simple measurements. If you are looking for incremental implementation of a specific practice, you can do the transactional piece. But if you are in the realm of policy transformation, you had better be building communication and relationships.”

Leather, who has led competency efforts in the New Hampshire Department of Education since they began, also noted the importance of strong relationships and shared understanding—including the ability to be responsive to individual funders' priorities. He has learned how to ensure his career- and college-readiness priorities align with evolving political leadership and the shifting vocabularies of funders over time.

"I think that the key is that you really have to be responsive to funders' priorities as they have defined them through their own strategic planning mechanism," he said. "In the space we are talking about, you have Nellie Mae and they have student-centered learning and a well-defined way of thinking about that that includes competency-based education and personalized learning. Then you have the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and their frame is what they call deeper learning, and they have a definition for that which includes much the same work that is included in student-centered learning. Then when you get to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, it's personalized learning."

Complicating matters, funders also often go through intermediaries, who themselves award program grants—ushering in another set of vocabulary and similar but slightly different priorities. Such relationships may complicate communication channels between practitioners and funders.

"Those national intermediaries kind of travel with the foundations and speak their language and have deep longitudinal relationships, so those of us at the ground level have to get their attention from a little further away," he said.

### The PACE Pilot

Nellie Mae awarded \$25,500 to New Hampshire Department of Education in 2012, to support writing an application for a waiver from NCLB. The state also leveraged Hewlett funding for the Innovation Lab Network, in which New Hampshire had a long-standing role. The plan originated during a meeting with federal education officials several years earlier, when state leaders presented their early work on an alternative performance-based assessment model, Leather recalled.

Then-Secretary Arne Duncan did not dismiss the concept, and instead urged state leaders to meet with psychometrics experts at the U.S. Department of Education. After that meeting, and with assistance from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment,<sup>15</sup> they created a performance-based assessment system and trained four leading districts to implement it. That formed the basis of the successful NCLB waiver application in 2013,<sup>16</sup> which made New Hampshire the first state in the country to administer performance-based assessments in lieu of standardized tests.

The program, Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE), is in the second year of a two-year pilot.<sup>17</sup> Districts must apply to become PACE districts, and win approval based on their expertise and proven success with competency-based standards. The first four districts had worked with state officials for 5 years to develop the activities used for assessment; now, eight districts are taking part.

New Hampshire students participating in PACE demonstrate their competency through multi-step assignments that draw on academic knowledge and higher-order skills such as applying information, using

critical thinking or creating and communicating an original solution to a problem. Schools in those districts administer the Smarter Balanced assessment once in elementary and middle school, rather than every year, as an aligned systemic “audit” of student achievement. Starting this spring, students will take the SAT in 11th grade to fulfill requirements, rather than the high school Smarter Balanced exam. The relatively small size of the pilot was an important judgment by the state—one that mirrored Nellie Mae’s shifting orientation, said Toulmin.

“Certainly one pivot we have made, and I think the New Hampshire Department of Education has made this as well, is to move away from trying to support this work widely across the state at the local level,” he said. “The earlier pilot was really challenging work, and there was a lot of unevenness in implementation and the quality of those expanded learning opportunities for students. . . Wisely, they haven’t moved too quickly to make PACE flexibility available to too many districts.”

PACE can be hard to picture, but it’s easy to understand when you hear teachers talk about how they put it into practice, said state Board of Education member Bill Duncan. He recently took a small delegation from the state legislature to a PACE school, where they saw high-school chemistry students perform an experiment, break into teams to analyze data and then kick off writing individual narrative reports. Throughout the project, each student was working toward their personalized levels of mastery in several disciplines, based on their individual path, he said.

Leather noted that the PACE model is similar to the “51st state” model introduced in national policy circles in 2014, which calls for students to take formative assessments tied to occasional state exams, and to produce a “graduation portfolio” showing competency in skills and content aligned to readiness standards, along with other dashboard elements.<sup>18</sup> The state is evaluating the pilot with a \$390,000 grant from the Hewlett Foundation. Overall, he noted, “our construct for accountability is different than the standards-based movement’s concept. The old way was that the state sets standards (college- or career-readiness expectations, usually based on national standards), and then they would purchase or build a state assessment. Then, they would hold districts and schools accountable to that, and rank them based on how they performed.”

“This model is different,” Leather continued. “It’s defined around districts taking control of their accountability and assessment regime, based on a theory of action that they believe is how their students will learn and how their educators will support their learning. They put in place assessments and accountability based on that design, and the state holds them accountable to that.”

ESSA, while allowing for state flexibility, primarily stems from the traditional first model, Leather said. However, the law’s new Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority allows for states to pursue similar experiments. In January 2016, organizations including the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment and the National Center for Innovation in Education urged the federal education department to clarify the program and allow for ample planning time for would-be participants, in a letter to then-Acting U.S. Secretary of Education, John King.<sup>19</sup>

## Next Steps in New Hampshire

A potential challenge going forward may be the political climate in New Hampshire, where changes in education have become more controversial. For several years, education reforms flew mostly under the radar and were not met with pushback from the public, in part because they were locally led and voluntary. But a general backlash rooted in skepticism of Common Core standards eventually appeared in New Hampshire as well.<sup>20</sup>

The Tea Party won control of the state GOP in 2011,<sup>21</sup> and Tea Party candidates won seats in the legislature.<sup>22</sup> Then, the state's NCLB waiver raised the profile of the changes underway—even though it represented a successful bid to reduce federal testing requirements. Critics have gathered in town-hall meetings and via social media to share concerns,<sup>23</sup> and GOP lawmakers have twice attempted to pass legislation prohibiting Common Core implementation in public schools. The most recent attempt, in 2015, was passed but vetoed by outgoing Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, a coalition of organizations and individuals who supported Common Core standards and competency-focused reforms was taking shape. The group, which included the state Business and Industry Association, Chamber of Commerce, teachers unions and superintendents groups, had a mailing list of about 1,200 names and began to exert its influence in 2013 and 2014, said Duncan, a state board of education member and lead organizer. It was formally organized and named Reaching Higher New Hampshire in 2015, with the support of Achieve and the Helmsley Charitable Trust, he said.<sup>25</sup> Nellie Mae supported the group with a \$50,000 grant in 2015.

“It is a way of establishing a constructive, supportive voice for those who support public education in the state and who want to talk about the future,” he said.

Now, Reaching Higher New Hampshire publishes fact sheets on PACE and other key projects, tweets state legislative hearings, tracks key bills and shares teacher and student experiences in the new competency-based system. The group is in contact with local parent organizations and coordinates public meetings, including opportunities for parents to hear from teachers and get a tangible sense of competency-based education. Its legislative agenda will vary by session; next year, a major priority will be supporting legislation to authorize expanding the PACE pilot statewide, Duncan said.

“We are trying to get out in front of the debate,” he said. “We are bringing students and business to the fore in charismatic, visible ways. The business community is saying, competency-based education is critical to the future of our workforce in New Hampshire, and students are saying that performance-based assessments are better than the standardized tests they used to take. Our goal is, whatever comes with a new administration next January, they will feel the wind at their back if they are moving in the direction of our policies. And if not, they will feel the wind in their face.” Such efforts are of particular importance under ESSA, he said.

“I would say that the devolution of authority to the states means that if you don’t have an advocacy coalition in place to support public education policy, you very much need one now,” he said. “Or there’s no telling where the legislatures will take it.”

## ENGAGING WITH READINESS IN KENTUCKY

In the summer of 2010, education leaders in Kentucky were reflecting on two decades of change. In 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled the state's public education system unconstitutional, ending decades of secrecy in district management, leadership appointments, spending and curriculum choices. Shortly after, a coalition of citizens, business leaders, advocates and higher-education officials influenced a complete overhaul of how public education was run in Kentucky, from changing rules and regulations to firing and selectively rehiring officials at the state Department of Education.

They had important support from the state's business community, which made clear that the state's economic prospects would be buoyed—or sunk—by the quality of its education system. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce had long supported reform, including by supporting increases in corporate and sales taxes to pay for it.<sup>26</sup> There were local nonprofit allies, too, such as the non-partisan Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, based in Lexington.<sup>27</sup> Since its founding in the mid-1980s, it focused on sharing information and empowering parents to keep close watch on progress across the state.

By 2009, the percentage of Kentucky's high-school graduates entering college had hit an all-time high of 56 percent.<sup>28</sup> That same year, the legislature passed Senate Bill 1, a comprehensive set of education reforms including a call for college-readiness standards and a new statewide school assessment and accountability system.<sup>29</sup> And in 2010, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to adopt Common Core State Standards, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation granted the Prichard Committee \$599,000 to oversee district pilots of new math assessments and instructional tools aligned to the Common Core.<sup>30</sup>

So then-Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday had plenty of news to share as he stepped to the podium to discuss upcoming assessment and accountability changes with the state's business leaders in downtown Louisville. It was during the Q-and-A when someone brought up the college graduate working at a local gas station.

"This business person told a story, where he had stopped to get gas at a 7-Eleven, and gone inside to get a cup of coffee," Holliday said, "and working behind the counter was the son of one of his neighbors, who had recently completed a four-year degree in psychology. He was unable to find work and was back home, living in his parents' basement."

"This business man said, 'Doc Holliday, while I appreciate a four-year degree, I have been advertising for the last 12 months for industrial maintenance engineers, who would need a 1-year certification in that area and would have a starting salary of \$60,000, and I cannot find people with that skillset and that certification,'" Holliday recalled. "And he told me it was extremely important that our new accountability model should do something to incent career-ready graduates who were also academically prepared to enter credit-bearing courses. We needed to add pathways to industry certifications."

## **After High School, Diverse Futures**

The path to a college degree is not always straight, and looking solely at a 4-year degree overlooks other important opportunities—as well as workforce needs. This was a message envoys from the Kentucky Department of Education and the Prichard Committee would hear time and again as they crisscrossed Kentucky to discuss the changes brought forth by Senate Bill 1. While few questioned the importance of college readiness, citizens, business leaders and military representatives raised questions about it as a singular, self-justifying goal. It amounted to yet another expanded sense of mission for the Kentucky Department of Education. In years past, Holliday said, educators thought their mission was to get students to graduate high school. Then, the mission evolved to get students into college. But in 2010, a new mission emerged: to prepare all students for a diversified set of opportunities after graduation.

“Being college-ready academically was one thing, but what did it mean to be academically prepared to enter credit-bearing courses in a career pathway? And what were the technical skills you would need to get an industry certification, and eventually a 2-year degree?” he said.

### ***Career Readiness***

The state pursued a broader sense of “readiness” as it set new standards, so schools could better prepare students for whatever path they chose after graduation. Not only could students seek and demonstrate college readiness, they could also focus their studies on career readiness, and demonstrate it by:

- Proficiency in reading and math, to reach workplace standards for proficiency in technical reading and writing (similarly demanding as the readiness standards for college work)
  - Measured by meeting benchmarks set by the state on traditional academic assessments, along with either the ACT WorkKeys<sup>31</sup> or the ASVAB military enlistment testing program<sup>32</sup>
- Proficiency in core skills in a chosen technical field
  - Measured by completing a career pathway of at least four high school classes, earning an industry certificate or progressing substantially toward a certificate (such as Cisco and Microsoft certifications or automotive and medical credentials)

### ***College Readiness***

Meanwhile, to ensure that college-readiness standards were sufficiently rigorous and aligned with what students would actually encounter at local colleges and universities, the Kentucky Department of Education collaborated with the state Council on Postsecondary Education. New state tests were aligned not only to Common Core standards, but also to three college-readiness assessments that all Kentucky students would take: the EXPLORE exam in 8th grade, the PLAN in 10th grade and the ACT exam in 11th grade.<sup>33</sup> Importantly, in addition, every postsecondary school in the state agreed to adopt common ACT cut scores that would guarantee students entry to credit-bearing classes.

For the first time, families would know exactly what their children would have to master, down to the exact passing score, in order to graduate high school fully prepared to progress in college. And because

every student took warm-up tests and, eventually, the ACT in 11th grade, they would have ample time, in addition to these clear signals, to address remediation needs. The high school assessments featured some built-in flexibility, such as varying passing scores based on a student's intended course of study (algebra "readiness" was set with a somewhat lower ACT math score than calculus "readiness," for example). The state also offered two alternative college-readiness assessment paths for students who did not pass the ACT. After completing a transitional high school class or other targeted intervention following a low ACT score, students could complete the computer-based Kentucky Online Testing (KYOTE)<sup>34</sup> or COMPASS<sup>35</sup> tests to guarantee college placement.

"The focus had changed from basic skills to a readiness to take an entry-level academic course in college," said Holliday. "We were able to statistically go back all the way to 3rd grade and see what students should know and be able to do, to predict if they'd be ready for the 11th grade assessment."

Setting standards was one challenge. Implementing them was poised to be far more difficult. How were teachers going teach to these new standards? What curriculum would they use? How would they measure progress?

## **Support for Implementation**

As Kentucky faced those questions, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was looking to make bigger, systems-level investments in education. This "integration" work focused on state agencies and was a departure from its typical investments in districts or networks.

We were asking, "Is there a way to work with a state agency or another group in a state that brings people together? To have them think collectively with groups of districts about things we were working on, like teacher effectiveness or high standards?" recalled Gates Foundation Senior Program Officer Amy Hodges Slamp.

The Gates Foundation looked to the Kentucky Department of Education (along with similar agencies in Colorado and Louisiana), where program officers saw a solid foundation for progress. Kentucky had strong policies in place, such as Senate Bill 1, committed leadership in then-Gov. Steve Beshear and Commissioner Holliday, and evidence that educators and districts in the state wanted to engage with the new standards. And Kentucky had a history of embracing and enacting change.

The state also had a ready local partner in the Prichard Committee. Originally founded in 1980 as a governor-appointed panel focused on higher education, the Prichard Committee quickly regrouped after its initial review outlining shortcomings in higher education was ignored. By the mid-1980s, it had become a private non-profit focused on K-16, and began to train parents to advocate for excellence in their communities. Since then, it had published numerous reports on educational performance and served as an important bipartisan watchdog and source of information focused on improving Kentucky schools.<sup>36</sup>

After an initial \$599,000 grant for new math curriculum tools and assessments, the Prichard Committee's work soon grew to encompass English Language Arts curriculum and assessment development as well.

Additional grants to the organization in 2010 nearly doubled the original investment. Then, the Gates Foundation's involvement in Kentucky took on an even wider view, as it made two \$1 million grants in late 2010: one to the state Department of Education, to support scaling the pilot work on instructional tools and assessments; and one to the Council on Postsecondary Education, to support the state's college-attainment goals.

Its scope and investment expanded significantly again in mid-2011 with the announcement of three major types of support, at varying levels, to maintain momentum:

- \$9.8 million to the Kentucky Department of Education, to support implementing new standards and scaling new instructional tools across the state, as well as bringing a new teacher evaluation system online
- \$2.6 million in direct investments to 10 Kentucky districts, ranging from \$86,000 to \$479,000, to support the implementation of the curriculum and assessment tools developed in the pilot
- \$198,000 to the Prichard Committee, to support a new public information campaign about the standards called ReadyKentucky<sup>37</sup>

### **Building Capacity from the Ground Up**

Those funds soon went to work on a three-point campaign to develop new curriculum, pilot those tools and scale efforts across the state. Importantly, the state immediately brought homegrown and out-of-state experts together, and involved Kentucky teachers in all three strands of this work.

"I strongly believe that outside expertise injected into a staid kind of environment is where the new innovation occurs," said Gates Foundation Senior Program Officer Felicia Smith, who was an associate education commissioner in Kentucky from 2009-2014. "That's where we can bring new thoughts, new ideas, that can help a state education agency or system move in a different way."

First, the Gates Foundation helped by bringing in independent experts in content and pedagogy during the drafting process, to lend additional capacity to experts already on staff at the state. Then, teacher leaders were brought together to review the standards and work with the Literacy Design Collaborative (LCD)<sup>38</sup> and Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC)<sup>39</sup> to develop and test-drive resources.

"We co-designed and co-authored the tools and resources to help teachers implement the standards better," said Smith. "We both felt ownership over the tools published as the LDC and the MDC."

Then came the pilots. At the time, the Great Recession was punishing state budgets in Kentucky and around the country, so foundation dollars provided important incentives for districts to participate. Direct district grants ranging from \$75,000 to \$200,000 covered costs, such as releasing teachers from their typical duties.

"In the philanthropic world, that is not a lot of money, but in the district world, it's huge," said Smith. "Seventy-five thousand dollars can really change what happens in a school."

Teachers then gathered to discuss their experiences, fine-tune tools and drive discussions about scale. Kentucky then brought together teacher leaders from across the state, including grade-level representatives from every district. The state also convened similar groups of principals and administrators, and tasked districts with establishing rollout teams after the trainings. Participants could receive stipends for their involvement of about \$100 per day. Having outside support allowed Kentucky to “tap technical assistance that, as a state, we may not have even been aware of,” Smith said. This may be particularly critical in rural areas, Smith said, where schools and districts operate at a smaller scale with fewer generalized resources than in more densely populated communities.

“In the world of curriculum, there is a lot of stuff out there and a lot of times systems don’t make good decisions because they don’t have the time to research and look at evidence,” she said.

Other funders invested in college- and career-readiness in Kentucky as well. The GE Foundation invested directly in Jefferson County schools, focused on mathematics performance, as part of its Developing Futures in Education program.<sup>40</sup> And the Lumina Foundation supported the creation of 55,000 Degrees, a public-private partnership with civic and business leaders in Louisville with the goal of increasing the number of 2- and 4-year college graduates by 55,000, by 2020.<sup>41</sup>

## **Preventing Pushback**

To protect progress, funders actively took on the communications challenge that change often poses, through the ReadyKentucky initiative created by the Prichard Committee. The campaign, like much of the organization’s ongoing efforts, provided explanations of the new standards and assessments to Kentucky citizens, and particularly parents, through public forums, a website and brochures.

“Engaging the community in conversation is at the Prichard Committee’s root bed,” said Executive Director Brigitte Blom Ramsey. “We grew out of a group of volunteer citizens engaged with education reform and committed to increasing quality.”

The communications effort was spurred by a concern that once parents saw test results aligned to the new standards, confusion and public outcry could follow, said Associate Executive Director Cory Curl.

“Yet it was a very smooth transition,” she said. “That investment in building awareness and deepening understanding of what was about to occur and why it was important to the state was responsible for the smoothness of the transition and lack of pushback.”

While the initial transition to readiness standards is complete, the state has seen significant political changes and the Prichard Committee continues to play an important role, particularly in terms of educating the public.

“Our role has been to build support for rich and rigorous implementation at the local level,” said Blom Ramsey. “We want citizens to know what they should be seeing and to advocate for strong implementation at the local level. That has helped us push back at the state level on any attempts to backtrack, and also push forward at the school and district level with full implementation.”

In addition, in 2013 a network of local organizations, with support from the Gates Foundation and the Prichard Committee, founded The Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky,<sup>42</sup> a new Legacy Fund-like intermediary to provide an ongoing source of support for statewide educational improvement in Kentucky, particularly standards implementation.<sup>43</sup> Such intermediaries can serve as important enablers of foundation support for innovation and are growing; the Kentucky fund, for example, resembles the Colorado Education Initiative (formerly the Colorado Legacy Foundation).<sup>44</sup>

## **Next Steps in Kentucky**

To be sure, implementation challenges remain. Like educators elsewhere, Kentucky teachers are faced with a persistent dearth of aligned curriculum materials.

“We are turning from a system dependent upon textbooks to a system where teachers are looking at standards and trying to figure out what kind of materials and lessons it is going to take to have students perform at those standards,” said Curl. There is a clear role for funders going forward in helping teachers share materials, she noted.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, Kentucky faces a common challenge posed by raising the bar through its own readiness standards, which support higher-order thinking skills. It’s a goal that calls for activities that engage critical thinking, problem solving and learning-oriented habits of mind—while also promoting academic and technical knowledge acquisition.

These next steps pose a challenge. Kentucky can support college- and career-readiness in the long term, by continuing to improve aligned standards and goals, along with appropriate materials, instructional methods and assessments. But implementation will continue to challenge educators across the state. How will a new system of accountability for higher skills and more robust academic knowledge flourish? How can Kentucky maintain the appropriate understanding, capacity, will and support?

One organization that may help provide some answers is the National Center for Innovation in Education, which was established in 2013 at the University of Kentucky College of Education in Lexington. It operates with the support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which has granted \$3.1 million to support the center, and with \$1 million in support from the Gates Foundation. The center is currently administering a \$2 million grant program with Next Generation Learning Challenges.<sup>46</sup> The program is planned to support 12-15 pilots of new types of assessments, to “fundamentally rethink the core role(s) assessment can play to support student attainment of deeper learning.”<sup>47</sup>

That, said Holliday, “is the next frontier.”

## THE INNOVATION IMPERATIVE OF ESSA

The clock is already ticking on how states will revise standards and accountability under the new law, with state plans to implement ESSA projected to be due within 12-18 months of its signing in December 2015.

ESSA was designed to limit the authority of the federal government, stating that the U.S. Education Secretary shall not “mandate, direct, control, coerce, or exercise any direction or supervision over any of the challenging State academic standards adopted or implemented by a State.”<sup>48</sup> That leaves the work of setting standards up to states, which are at varying levels of preparedness for this work. While the opportunity to innovate and advance is clear, the risk of regression presents a possible threat to progress—and equity. While innovators, researchers and front-line states are learning a great deal about the sort of student-centered innovations empowered by ESSA, not all states are cued into the conversation. Will they be left to pave their own way?

### A Challenge for Equity

A brief history lesson lays out the risks of state authority, said Richard Laine, director of the education division at the National Governors Association.

“The fear is that it becomes, ‘let’s go back to state flexibility and innovation, and therefore we can lower the standards and not focus on the kids with the greatest needs,’ he said. “That history point for me is very important, because it puts parameters on flexibility and some humility into the challenges we are facing.”

On one hand, ambitious states have regained the authority to advance innovative goals without federal interference. Before NCLB redirected their priorities, for example, governors in states like Massachusetts, Kentucky, South Carolina and Minnesota were tying economic development to education and calling for dramatic reforms. However, without lockstep federal requirements, states might also move away from setting and reporting on high standards for all. Leaders might not adequately implement non-academic standards, or they could shy away from true college- and career-readiness standards under political pressure to do so.

All this could threaten advances toward equity made under NCLB, which encouraged national accomplishments like uniform graduation rate reporting and more continuous assessments of student progress, said Gene Wilhoit, now the executive director of the National Center for Innovation in Education, who previously led the Council of Chief State School Officers during widespread adoption of the Common Core.

“There is an opportunity for real advancement if we can get our act together and get enough momentum in the states in a positive direction,” he said. “But we might regress if states don’t pick this up and move as they should.”

Despite its limited role, the federal government has indicated it is ready to put pressure on the states to protect equity. In a speech celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day, then-Acting U.S. Secretary of Education John King highlighted the “continued role in the new law for the federal government as a backstop to ensure educational quality for all children, a protector of our students’ civil rights.”<sup>49</sup> He called on civil-rights leaders to advocate for greater socio-economic integration in public schools, support expanded access to

preschool and fight for equitable access to instruction aligned with higher standards, including access to qualified teachers. He also noted the risks posed by new flexibility and standards that encompass non-academic factors.

“The use of these kinds of new indicators of school success has tremendous potential to advance equity, but that will require the vigilance of parents, of educators, and of the civil rights community as each state creates its system of accountability,” he said. “Otherwise, these new indicators could serve to mask some of the equity and achievement gaps we are working so hard to close.”

### **Not a Checklist, but a Dashboard**

While ESSA empowers states to design dynamic, student-centered learning environments, and to hold educators accountable for that ambitious vision, it does not specify what systems must look like. Defining accountability presents a lengthy list of questions, said Wilhoit.

“What does a balanced system of assessments look like? How do we create an accountability system that allows for multiple inputs but also keeps reliability? What do we know about emerging networks for professional learning communities around the country? How do we think about just-in-time research, begin to build innovation and enterprise into education system? How do we address new methods to relate to the public, in terms of transparency and data reporting?” he asked – just as a starting point.

Experts are calling on states to design dynamic systems that include multiple measures of school performance, and to resist the urge to simplify these measures into a single letter grade or other single, summative “index” score. For example, Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University and the Learning Policy Institute suggested elements of a strong multiple-measures system could include:<sup>50</sup>

- Outcome Measures:
  - Course completion
  - Demonstration of college readiness (passing AP, IB or college classes)
  - 4- and 5-year graduation rates
  - Student performance on state assessments
  - Progress on English language proficiency assessments
  - Success on challenging projects
- Measures of Opportunity to Learn:
  - School resources (such as spending, technology and qualified teachers)
  - Access to a full curriculum (class offerings in all subjects)
  - School climate (such as student, teacher and parent surveys)
- Measures of Student Engagement:
  - Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates
  - Suspension and expulsion rates

## **Stability, Meet Instability**

Political schedules can make long-term commitments to innovation difficult, because 4-year gubernatorial terms<sup>51</sup> may not repeat and the average tenure of a state schools chief is now even shorter, at 3.2 years.<sup>52</sup> Yet non-appointed senior staff members are often very long-term civil servants. That can pose a different challenge, said Felicia Smith, who served as a teacher, district leader and associate commissioner in the Kentucky Department of Education before joining the Gates Foundation.

“Oftentimes in a state government or district leader role, you can go to a meeting and see the typical players, the same people who have been in a conversation about this particular issue for years,” she said. “Typically that’s a difficult place for innovation to occur.”

Complicating matters, in various capitals across the country, state lawmakers and governors are facing political pressure to abandon college- and career-aligned standards—and high-quality measures of them—particularly if they are branded as “Common Core.”

Oklahoma, for example, has retreated from high standards under political pressure. A 2014 state law was passed amid rhetoric about a federal takeover of education, repealing the Common Core and requiring new standards to be put in place by this year.<sup>53</sup> State educators and leaders undertook the design work while reverting to the state’s former standards in the interim. Without strong political leadership, Oklahoma “faced pressure to revert back to traditional standards, and they became voluminous,” said Wilhoit. “It’s a good example of, if states don’t work together on this, if they don’t share and go a different direction, we are going to lose our comparability and our rigor.”

## **SHORING UP THE STATES: LESSONS FOR FUNDERS**

ESSA presents a unique opportunity for funders. In coming months and years, states will face common tasks but bear individual responsibility for the systems and standards they create. Funders can empower bold educational design, think broadly about student goals that are connected to adult success, and influence outcomes throughout the vast diversity of school districts across the country.

In addition to valuable lessons, the cases on New Hampshire and Kentucky present questions that funders can ask themselves and their prospective partners:

- What incentives can we help create to move our states forward?
- Who can we convene to collaborate on similar challenges?
- Who can offer a valuable outside perspective?
- What are the gaps in accountability research?
- What are the proof points and how can we share them?
- How can we ensure successful innovations are equitably shared and survive over the long-term?

Lessons learned on state-based accountability systems are just starting to emerge. Despite recent and promising additional innovations in states such as California (through the CORE Districts’ waiver),<sup>54</sup> New

Hampshire and Kentucky are outliers in their longevity in working toward student-centered innovative systems—and, even for them, these are still very much works in progress. However, they can offer valuable lessons in terms of design and implementation, and serve as important examples to others of how states and funders can work together to protect equity and help ensure that every student succeeds.

## **Lessons to Consider**

### **Lesson 1: Policy isn't enough.**

One approach to creating reforms that outlive individual leaders is to codify them into laws or regulation. But it's clear that just having the right policies in place does not ensure that change will be implemented faithfully—or that the public will support it.

### **Lesson 2: Support complementary organizations toward shared goals.**

Foundations can be important partners for grantees, but can also support neighbor organizations that contribute to a common mission. From community outreach organizations to community groups, civil-rights groups and school districts, one tactic to amplify impact is to support constellations of organizations that serve a common community and a common cause.

### **Lesson 3: Use convening power to ease implementation.**

At the ground level, teachers will be charged with helping lead new lessons and prepare students to meet new measures of success. New academic standards have already outdistanced most textbook publishers; now, with state-level variation, off-the-shelf resources may not meet all educators' needs. Funders are well positioned to convene researchers, front-line state leaders, teacher leaders, content experts and others to develop necessary capacity and to share resources across state lines.

### **Lesson 4: Take on the communications challenge.**

Leading change means building public demand for it and the will to see it through. An informed public can hold state lawmakers to account, support implementation at their schools and ensure reform momentum is maintained over the long term. A strong and clear communications effort is a critical part of any education reform.

### **Lesson 5: Put politics into perspective.**

Political leaders at the state and federal levels must defend their offices every 2-6 years, depending on their roles. While politics is an important moving part in helping states effect change, it is also one that can shift quickly and without much warning. Focusing investment on building knowledge and expertise at the implementation level, alongside building public will and demand for high-quality outcomes, may serve as a bulwark against political complications.

### **Lesson 6: Keep equity as a top priority.**

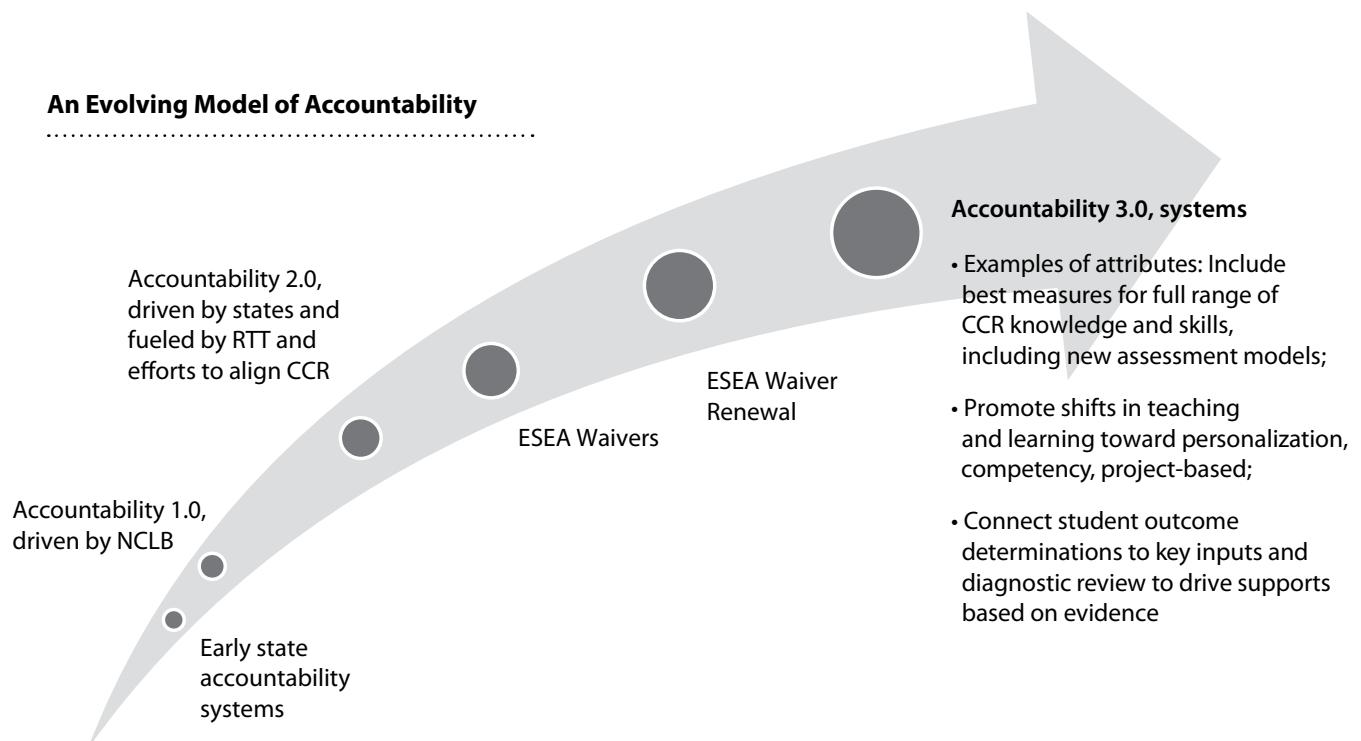
At all stages of policy and implementation, ask the equity question. Are all students protected and promoted? How might some students not benefit or, alternately, be elevated?

## **Self-Study Questions**

### **Questions to consider while reading this case about effective education grantmaking:**

1. What are the opportunities to innovate and advance accountability in education under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)? What are the potential risks to progress? How might equity be protected and advanced moving forward?
2. What are the commonalities and differences in how New Hampshire and Kentucky have approached accountability?
3. What aspects of funder grantmaking in New Hampshire and Kentucky caught your attention, and why?
4. What role did collaboration play in grantmakers' engagements in these states? How did they effectively utilize partnerships?
5. How have New Hampshire and Kentucky effectively leveraged public policy in their accountability work? In what ways could they have leveraged it even more effectively? Did policy drive their work or did their work drive the policy?
6. Have these state's efforts influenced accountability policy beyond their own borders? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. What advice would you give your own region or state on accountability based on New Hampshire and Kentucky's efforts?
8. What specific lessons and insights did you gain from this case and how might they apply to how you engage in accountability efforts?

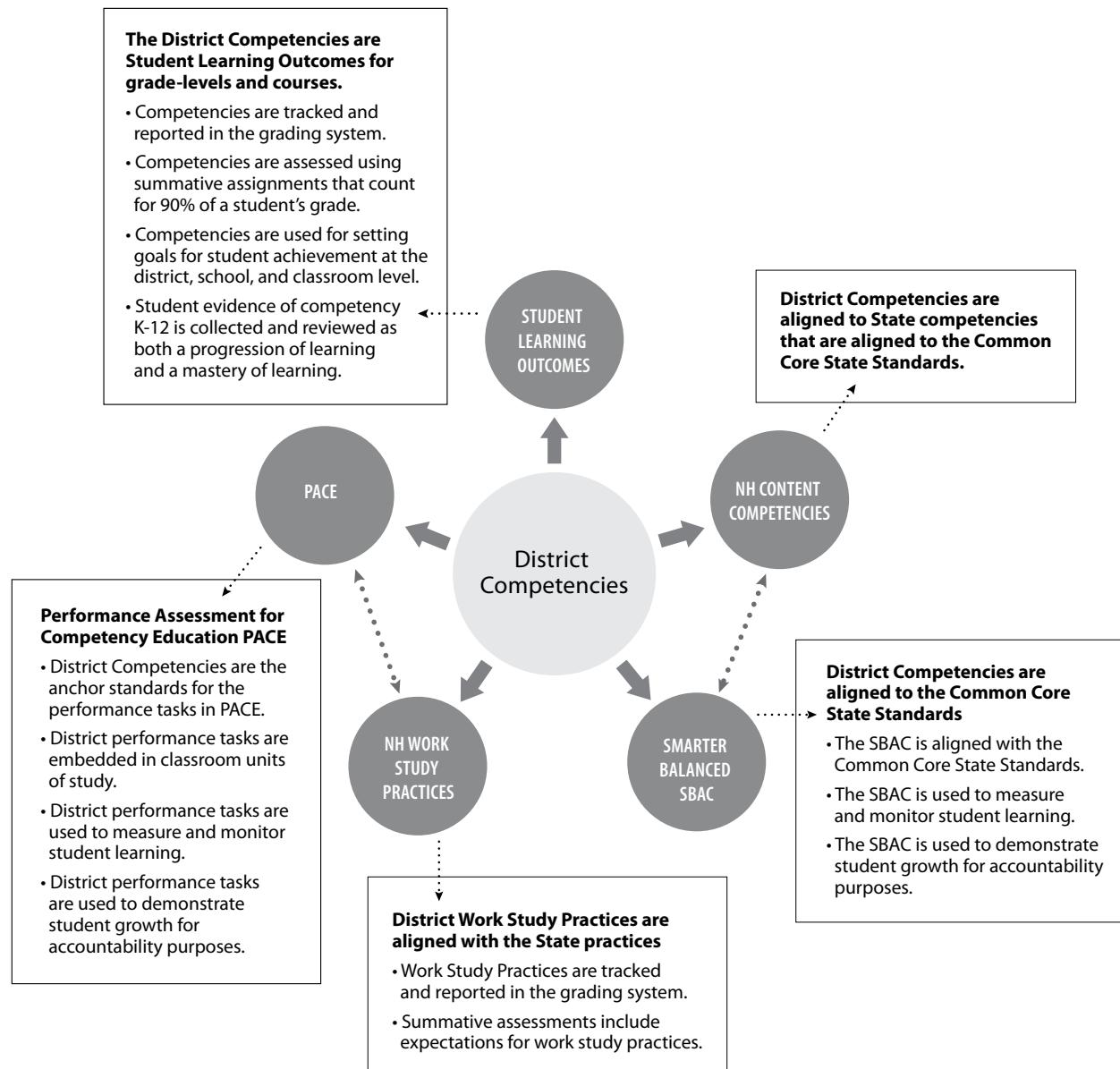
**ATTACHMENT A:**  
**New Thinking on Accountability**  
**An Evolving Model**



*Source: Presentation by Gene Wilhoit of the National Center for Innovation in Education, University of Kentucky, at the New Hampshire Convening in Competency Education on May 11, 2015. For more, see <http://education.nh.gov/assessment-systems/documents/competency-education-convening.pdf>*

**ATTACHMENT A:**  
**New Thinking on Accountability**  
**Sanborn Regional School District**

**Sanborn Regional School District Competency Connections**



Source: Presentation by Gene Wilhoit of the National Center for Innovation in Education, University of Kentucky, at the New Hampshire Convening in Competency Education on May 11, 2015. For more, see <http://education.nh.gov/assessment-systems/documents/competency-education-convening.pdf>

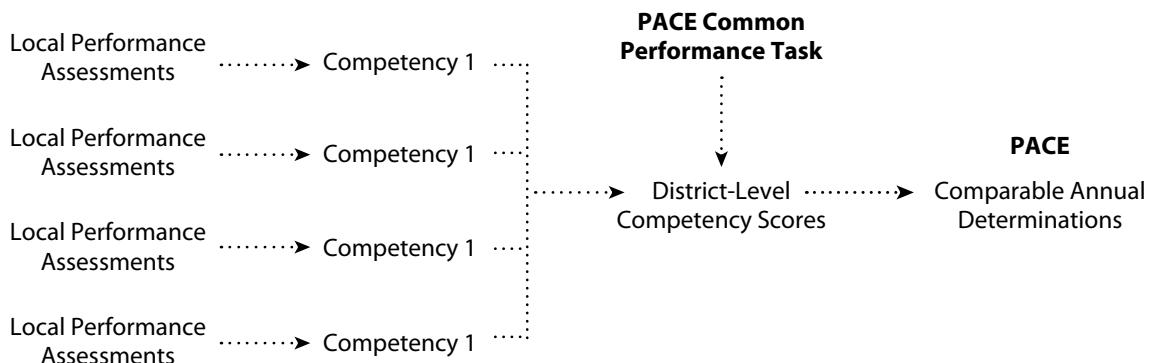
**ATTACHMENT B:**  
**In New Hampshire, Accountability in PACE**

In the PACE pilot, participating school districts in New Hampshire demonstrate student progress in three ways:

- Throughout each school year, students complete a series of locally developed performance assessments that are tied to grade and course competencies, which are set by individual districts
- During four school years, students take statewide tests: Smarter Balanced in grade 3 (ELA), grade 4 (math) and grade 8 (ELA and math); and the SAT in grade 11
- In all non-tested years, students complete one common complex performance assessment task for their grade that is developed and administered by all participating districts, to ensure that each teacher's evaluation of student performance is comparable to the evaluations of other teachers.

**Smarter Balanced/SAT in Select Grades**

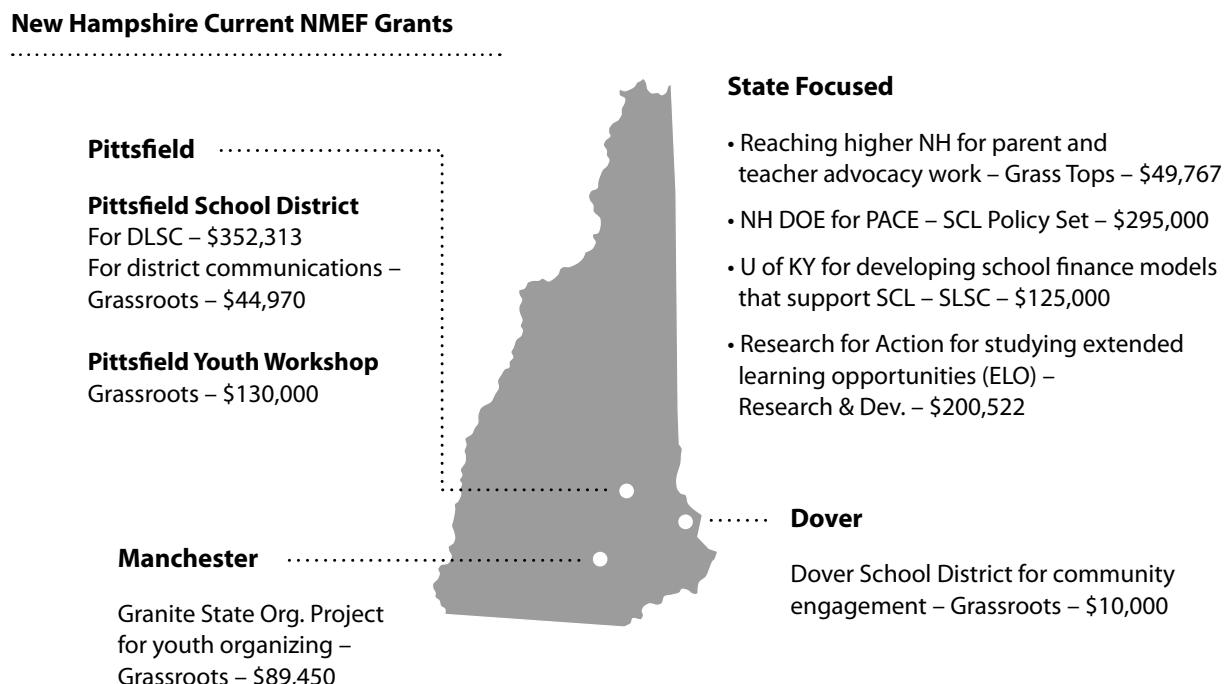
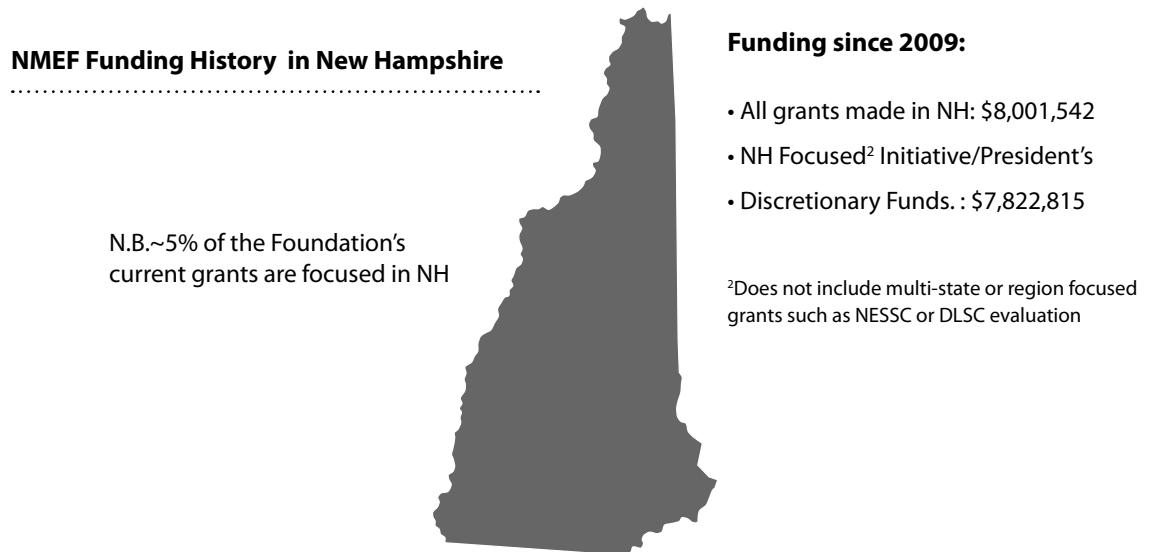
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For more, see *Moving from Good to Great in New Hampshire: Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE)* at <http://education.nh.gov/assessment-systems/documents/overview.pdf>

## ATTACHMENT C: Nellie Mae in New Hampshire

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation has supported developing and implementing competency-based learning in New Hampshire public schools over the past decade, through supporting research and knowledge development and providing direct support to the state education department and organizations that help schools and districts pilot and scale innovation.



**Recent past grants, by year:**

**2015**

- Reaching Higher New Hampshire: \$49,767 (*parent and teacher advocacy work, website communications*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$295,000 (*Year Two of the PACE pilot*)

**2014**

- Research for Action: \$200,522 (*to examine the effectiveness of extended learning opportunities on college and career readiness*)
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: \$32,500 (*for NH Department of Education and NH Coalition for Business and Education to develop a business plan to establish an independent entity to support transforming the state's pre-k – 16 institutions around a shared vision*)
- Granite State Organizing Project: \$89,450 (*work with Young Organizers United and increase public demand for student-centered learning*)
- National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies: \$50,00 (*for Digital Promise to host a study tour of NH schools employing competency-based learning*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$32,500 (*to develop a business plan with NH Coalition for Business and Education, to establish an independent entity to support transforming the state's pre-k – 16 institutions around a shared vision*)

**2013**

- Research for Action: \$199,476 (*to examine the effectiveness of extended learning opportunities on college and career readiness*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$230,000 (*to create a state-sanctioned performance assessment option for districts, to demonstrate high school progress as part of the state's accountability system*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$12,594 (*to support a group of New Hampshire educators involved in the state's work on bringing performance-based assessment to scale across the state, to attend the Center for Collaborative Education's Quality Performance Assessment Summer Institute*)

**2012**

- Asia Society: \$50,000 (*to codify learning developed in partnership with the Newfound Regional High School in Bristol, New Hampshire, which is developing a student-centered model*)
- Asia Society: \$75,000 (*see above*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$25,550 (*to develop an ESEA Flexibility Waiver together with Education First*)

**2011**

- Asia Society: \$75,000 (*to create a student-centered model of curriculum, instruction and assessment at Newfound Regional High School in Bristol*)
- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$100,000 (*to support partners involved in the ELO initiative*)

- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$250,000 (*to support PD and training for teachers to extend the state's Extended Learning Opportunities pilot*)

## **2010**

- New Hampshire Department of Education: \$100,000 (*to finish developing a performance-based system of school accountability*)
- Asia Society: \$75,000 (*to create a student-centered model with PlusTime NH and Newfound Regional High School*)
- University of Massachusetts, Donohue Institute: \$65,716 (*to evaluate an Extended Learning Opportunities pilot*)

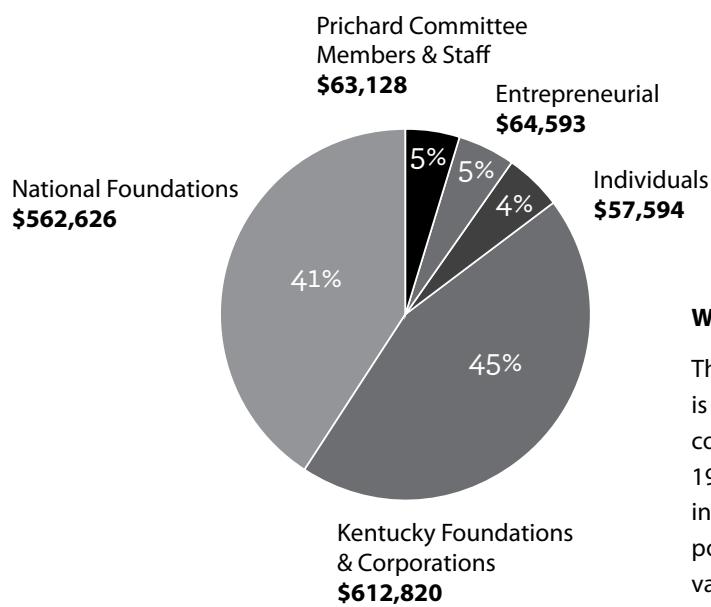
*Source: nmefoundation.org*

## ATTACHMENT D: Support for Kentucky's Prichard Committee

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence has supported education reform and improvement in Kentucky for more than two decades. It is supported by individual donors, local and statewide organizations in Kentucky, and national foundations.

### **2014 Prichard Committee Fundraising Goals**

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### **WHO WE ARE**

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an independent, nonpartisan nonprofit comprised of volunteers who have worked since 1983 to improve education. The group provides information and materials to educators, policymakers, and citizens across the state on a variety of student achievement and public school issues. The committee is not affiliated with Kentucky state government. It is named for the late Edward F. Prichard, a lawyer from Paris, who in 1980 led a citizens' committee on improving Kentucky's universities.

*Source: Prichard Committee 2014 Fundraising Report*

**Prichard Committee contributors in 2014 (the most recent year available) included:**

**\$75,000 or more**

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
The Pew Charitable Trusts  
Toyota Motor Manufacturing,  
Kentucky

**\$50,000 or more**

Pamela Papka Sexton  
State Farm Insurance Companies  
The C. E. and S. Foundation  
The Gheens Foundation Inc.

**\$25,000 or more**

United Way of Greater  
Cincinnati

**\$10,000 or more**

Augusta Brown Holland  
Philanthropic Foundation  
Sandra Frazier  
Henderson County Public  
Schools  
The Kentucky Bar  
Foundation, Inc.

**\$5,000 or more**

Columbia Gas of Kentucky, a  
NiSource Company  
Kevin J. Hable  
Margaret Holbrook  
IBM  
Joe Rosenberg Jewelers  
Stuart M. & Kathy Silberman  
Snowy Owl Foundation, Inc.  
The Cralle Foundation, Inc.  
Anonymous

**\$2,500 or more**

Central Bank & Trust Company  
Bill & Kim Garmer  
Richard & Cindy Heine  
LG&E & KU Energy LLC  
Charlie Owen  
Rockcastle Regional Hospital,  
Inc.  
Bill & Lindy Street  
Mary Gwen Wheeler

**\$1,000 or more**

AT&T  
Don & Mira Ball  
Brad & Cynthia D. Baumert  
Ina B. Bond Ashbourne  
Charitable Fund  
John & Lee Carroll  
Community Trust Bank, Inc.  
Sam & Mary Michael Corbett  
CSI  
Ben & Janine Cundiff  
Jean M. & Dennis T. Dorton  
Donna S. Hall  
Frank & Elsie Harris  
Hercules Fund  
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel D. Hinkle, IV  
Franklin Jelsma  
Cheryl S. & David W. Karp, M.D.  
Lawrence-Heine Family Fund  
at Blue Grass Community  
Foundation  
Charles & Fannie Louise  
Maddux  
Lewis N. & Barbara Melton  
Pam & Ralph Miller, M.D.

**Norton Healthcare**

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Raimondo  
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Ross Tarrant Architects, Inc.  
Jon L. & Rebecca S. Sights  
David Tachau & Susannah  
Woodcock  
Diana Taylor & Bob Gray  
The Courier-Journal/Gannett  
Foundation  
Beau & Susan Weston  
Lee T. White  
Harvie & Nellie Wilkinson  
John A. & Vivian G. Williams  
Sally H. Wood  
Wyatt Tarrant & Combs, LLP  
Anonymous

**\$500 or less**

206 donors

*Source: Prichard Committee 2014  
Fundraising Report*

**ATTACHMENT E:**  
**College- and Career-Readiness in Kentucky**

The chart below shows the different tests and qualifications that a student must obtain to be considered college ready, career ready, or college and career ready.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR ALL				
<b>COLLEGE READY (1 Point)</b>  A student must meet benchmarks on one of the following:	<b>CAREER READY (1 Point)</b>  A student must meet benchmarks on one from <b>each</b> of the following columns:		<b>COLLEGE &amp; CAREER READY (1.5 Points)</b>  A student must meet benchmarks on one from <b>each</b> of the following columns:	
ACT or COMPASS or KYOTE	Career Ready Academic  ASVAB or WorkKeys	Career Ready Technical  KOSSA or Industry Certificate	Career Ready Academic  ACT or COMPASS or KYOTE	Career Ready Technical  KOSSA or Industry Certificate

*Source: education.ky.gov*

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/12/the-bloated-rhetoric-of-no-child-left-behinds-demise/419688/>
- <sup>2</sup> <http://aiesec.org/skills-of-2020-and-changing-leadership/>
- <sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deeper\\_Learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deeper_Learning)
- <sup>4</sup> <http://hewlett.org/blog/author/christopher-shearer>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/06/04/33competency-h33.html>
- <sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie\\_Unit\\_and\\_Student\\_Hour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Unit_and_Student_Hour)
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/Biennial/95-96/eval/410-97.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/Nhworkforce.pdf>
- <sup>9</sup> [http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/field\\_attach\\_file/NMEF\\_scframeweb.pdf](http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/field_attach_file/NMEF_scframeweb.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> For a thorough timeline, see [http://education.nh.gov/innovations/hs\\_redesign/background.htm](http://education.nh.gov/innovations/hs_redesign/background.htm)
- <sup>11</sup> Bramante no longer serves on the board, and is now president of the National Center for Competency-Based Learning. For more, see <http://www.nccbl.org/index.html>
- <sup>12</sup> <http://www.nmefoundation.org/>
- <sup>13</sup> <http://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network>
- <sup>14</sup> [http://www.ccsso.org/What\\_We\\_Do/Innovation\\_Lab\\_Network.html](http://www.ccsso.org/What_We_Do/Innovation_Lab_Network.html)
- <sup>15</sup> The Center's work has been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For more, see <http://www.nciea.org/>
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/obama-administration-approves-nclb-flexibility-request-new-hampshire-39-states-and-dc-now-approved-waivers>
- <sup>17</sup> <http://education.nh.gov/assessment-systems/pace.htm>
- <sup>18</sup> The 51st state model calls for a revised accountability and was published in a paper by Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene Wilhoit and Linda Pittenger. For a summary, see [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2014/10/continuous\\_improvement\\_in\\_51st.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2014/10/continuous_improvement_in_51st.html) and for the full paper, see [http://competencyworks.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/85442320/Accountability%20for%20CCR\\_New%20Paradigm.pdf](http://competencyworks.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/85442320/Accountability%20for%20CCR_New%20Paradigm.pdf)
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Comment-Letter-for-US-Department-of-Education-on-ESSA-Request-for-Information-RFI.pdf>
- <sup>20</sup> <http://nhpr.org/post/common-core-skeptics-and-supporters-cut-across-political-boundaries>
- <sup>21</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/us/politics/23hampshire.html>
- <sup>22</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/new-hampshire-legislature-curriculum-objection-law\\_n\\_1184476.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/new-hampshire-legislature-curriculum-objection-law_n_1184476.html)
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.the74million.org/article/inside-new-hampshires-common-core-showdown-will-gov-hassans-veto-embolden-thecritics>
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.unionleader.com/24 article/20150508 NEWS0621/150509252&source=RSS>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://reachinghighernh.org/>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/1990/04/18/09360005.h09.html>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://prichardcommittee.org/>
- <sup>28</sup> <http://www.kychamber.com/sites/default/files/PostsecondaryUpdate2010.pdf>
- <sup>29</sup> <http://education.ky.gov/comm/ul/Pages/default.aspx>
- <sup>30</sup> <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/02/Grants-to-Develop-Test-NextGeneration-Teaching-Tools-in-Math-and-Literacy>
- <sup>31</sup> <https://www.act.org/products/workforce-act-workkeys/>
- <sup>32</sup> <http://official-asvab.com/>
- <sup>33</sup> The Kentucky program was the basis for ACT's Aspire model, an set of summative, interim and classroom assessments for grades 3-10, similarly aligned to college-readiness benchmarks and Common Core standards. All of the college-readiness tests are ACT products. For more, <https://www.act.org/>
- <sup>34</sup> <https://www.kyote.org/mc/kyoteDefault.aspx>
- <sup>35</sup> <http://education.ky.gov/aa/assessments/pages/compass.aspx>
- <sup>36</sup> <http://prichardcommittee.org/about-us/prichard-committee-timeline/>
- <sup>37</sup> <http://prichardcommittee.org/our-advocacy-focus/collegecareer-ready/readykentucky/>
- <sup>38</sup> <https://ldc.org/about-us/our-partners/kentucky-department-education>
- <sup>39</sup> <http://collegeready.gatesfoundation.org/student-success/high-standards/literacy-tools/mathematics-design-collaborative/>
- <sup>40</sup> <http://www.gefoundation.com/education/developing-futures/>
- <sup>41</sup> <http://www.55000degrees.org/about-55k/>
- <sup>42</sup> <http://www.thefundky.org/>
- <sup>43</sup> <http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/education/article44418885.html>
- <sup>44</sup> <http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/>
- <sup>45</sup> To address the need for updated curricular materials, several funders helped support the launch of EdReports in 2015, which conducts independent reviews of the alignment of materials from publishers. For more, see [edreports.org](http://edreports.org)
- <sup>46</sup> <http://nextgenlearning.org/>
- <sup>47</sup> <http://nextgenlearning.org/assessment-learning-project>
- <sup>48</sup> [http://www.ncsl.org/documents/capitolforum/2015/onlineresources/summary\\_12\\_10.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/documents/capitolforum/2015/onlineresources/summary_12_10.pdf)
- <sup>49</sup> [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/49 2016/01/john\\_king\\_to\\_call\\_for\\_emphasis.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/49 2016/01/john_king_to_call_for_emphasis.html)
- <sup>50</sup> <http://educationnext.org/more-on-how-states-should-navigate-new-opportunities-under-essa-part-2-of-2/>
- <sup>51</sup> Most states have 4-year terms; gubernatorial terms in Vermont and New Hampshire are only 2 years.
- <sup>52</sup> <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/01/28/turnover-growing-job-duties-complicate-state-chiefs.html>
- <sup>53</sup> <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/newstandards>
- <sup>54</sup> <http://coredistricts.org/school-quality-improvement-system-waiver/>

## Notes

PRINCIPLES FOR

# Effective Education Grantmaking

principle  
no.

1

## Discipline and Focus

In education, where public dollars dwarf private investments, a funder has greater impact when grantmaking is carefully planned and targeted.

principle  
no.

2

## Knowledge

Information, ideas and advice from diverse sources, as well as openness to criticism and feedback, can help a funder make wise choices.

principle  
no.

3

## Resources Linked to Results

A logic-driven “theory of change” helps a grantmaker think clearly about how specific actions will lead to desired outcomes, thus linking resources with results.

principle  
no.

4

## Effective Grantees

A grantmaker is effective only when its grantees are effective. Especially in education, schools and systems lack capacity and grantees (both inside and outside the system) may require deeper support.

principle  
no.

5

## Engaged Partners

A funder succeeds by actively engaging its partners – the individuals, institutions and communities connected with an issue – to ensure “ownership” of education problems and their solutions.

principle  
no.

6

## Leverage, Influence and Collaboration

The depth and range of problems in education make it difficult to achieve meaningful change in isolation or by funding programs without changing public policies or opinions. A grantmaker is more effective when working with others to mobilize and deploy as many resources as possible in order to advance solutions.

principle  
no.

7

## Persistence

The most important problems in education are often the most complex and intractable, and will take time to solve.

principle  
no.

8

## Innovation and Constant Learning

Even while acting on the best available information – as in Principle #2 – a grantmaker can create new knowledge about ways to promote educational success. Tracking outcomes, understanding costs and identifying what works—and what doesn’t—are essential to helping grantmakers and their partners achieve results.

Grantmakers for Education (GFE) is a national network of hundreds of education philanthropies, united by a passion and commitment to improve public education and learning for all students of all ages, cradle to career. GFE is a force multiplier, harnessing the collective power of education grantmakers to increase momentum, impact, and outcomes for this nation's learners. We are proud to promote a culture of learning among education funders and provide a forum for interaction and engagement that builds upon and deepens the impact of our member's individual investments. Grantmakers for Education and its members believe in the power of what we can all achieve when we work together and learn from each other's successes and challenges.

