

Phase II Evaluation of the New England Secondary School Consortium

Phase II Evaluation Objectives

During Phase II the objectives of the UMass Donahue Institute's evaluation are to:

1. Document the Consortium's work through the end of August 2011.
2. Track and assess Consortium and state-level progress achieved within each of their three broad objectives and supporting strategies.
3. Collect, organize, and report FY 2010 NESSC performance objective data and compare against baseline data for measurement of progress toward the initiative's long-term desired outcomes.
4. Develop and propose an evaluation design that encompasses future years of the initiative.

Major Research Questions

The guiding evaluation questions will include the following:

- What processes were used for carrying the work of the Consortium and for each participating state forward? Did these processes change over the course of the year? If so, how and why?
- How did working in a multi-state context help or hinder the continued progress of the NESSC and its participating states? What benefits arose as a result of the multi-state context? What challenges did the multi-state context create?
- How did national political and economic contexts impact the work of the Consortium?
- How did educational and political leadership changes in each state affect the work of the Consortium?
- To what extent did the Consortium progress toward desired short and long-term outcomes as identified in their Phase II proposal? What factors influenced the extent of implementation?
- What other outcomes were accomplished over the year in support of the Consortium's short and long-term goals and performance objectives?
- Which practices and strategies were particularly effective in carrying out the work?
- To what extent did the Consortium establish the foundation for change, or realize actual change, with regard to each of their three broad objectives?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages of states doing the work in the context of a regional, multi-state effort, and to what extent did individual states make progress in aligning their efforts with agreed upon NESSC goals?

Data Collection and Research Methods

Evaluation Objectives 1 and 2: Documenting the Work and Tracking Progress

Attendance and Participation at NESSC Meetings

UMDI will attend and participate in each of the NESSC Council, Working Group and newly established strategic action team meetings held over the next year. Evaluation team members will also participate in at least two of each of their designated states' in-state Council meetings.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Two full-day visits will take place at each of the five participating state Departments of Education. Similar to the Phase I evaluation, interviewees will likely include: DOE Commissioners, state Leads, state Liaisons, secondary school and assessment directors, legislative representatives, governors representatives, and state Council members. At least one set of formal full-day interviews will also occur with key staff from GSP and NMEF.

Surveys

UMDI will administer an online survey to a wide range of NESSC participants which will be used as a source of data to measure Consortium progress on their three objectives and supporting strategies. UMDI will also work with GSP to supplement their NESSC spring 2011 conference participant evaluation forms with a series of questions aimed at capturing feedback from educators.

Review and Analysis of Relevant Documents/Tools

UMDI will work with the Consortium to identify any existing and newly created regional and state-level documents and tools that are relevant to the evaluation questions.

Evaluation Objective 3: Report on NESSC Performance Objective Data

The third objective of the evaluation is to collect, organize, and report FY2010 NESSC performance objective data (2016 indicators) and compare these with baseline data in order to measure progress toward the initiative's desired outcomes.

Evaluation Objective 4: Develop an Evaluation Design for Next Phase of NESSC

The final objective of the evaluation is to develop a comprehensive evaluation design for the next phase of the Consortium's work. As part of this process, UMDI will assist the NESSC in identifying a set of student and school achievement metrics that align with the NESSC goals and that will be used to measure future impacts and success of the League of Innovative Schools program.

Communications and Deliverables

- Phase II Consortium and State Specific Logic Models: UMDI will collaborate with GSP and others to produce and finalize logic models for the Consortium and for each of the five participating states.
- Evaluation Briefs: As in Phase I, UMDI will produce evaluation briefs to provide formative feedback based on timely evaluation findings to be written and disseminated after key data collection activities occur.
- NESSC Data Technical Report: UMDI will produce a Year 1 NESSC data technical report to include tables comparing baseline to Year 1 for the region, individual states, and key subgroups.
- Next Phase Evaluation Plan: UMDI will design an evaluation plan for the next phase of NESSC work which will rely upon the NESSC to reach agreement on several major components of the project. These include annual progress goals, identification of a set of student and school achievement metrics that will be used to measure impact and success of the League of Innovative Schools program, types of progress that need to be made to reach the stated long-term goals of the project, etc.
- Final Evaluation Report: Findings related to Phase II evaluation will be presented in a written summative evaluation report detailing the NESSC's efforts, strategies, and accomplishments from July 2010 through June 2011.