



Data Strategic Action Team

Wednesday, January 10, 2018 | 9:30 AM – 3:00PM

Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH
MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 AM in the Concord Room at the Grappone Conference Center in Concord, NH.

Those in attendance included: Janet Fiderio (NH), Erik Klardie (NH), Heather Bouchey (VT), Craig Weller (MA), Rachel Strange (VT), Rick Bergeron (ME), Lisa Plimpton (GSP), Lauren Leigh Hinthorne (GSP), and Duke Albanese (GSP). Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Chuck Martie from Connecticut joined via phone as did Ken Gu from Rhode Island.

All NESSC states were represented.

The meeting began with introductions and a formal welcome to Craig Weller as the representative from Massachusetts, the latest state to become a member of the New England Secondary School Consortium. The NESSC Data Team also welcomed Lisa Plimpton as NESSC's new Data Coordinator and Rachel Strange as Vermont's data analyst for NESSC.

The agenda moved to state updates and data representatives shared the following as highlights:

- New Hampshire has a new Education Commissioner, a new Higher Education Division director, and has had tremendous personnel turnover in the past three years.
- Because of a new, centralized procurement protocol, Vermont does not currently have an MOU with the National Student Clearinghouse, which may affect timely ESSA and NESSC reporting.
- Massachusetts is in the process of appointing a new Commissioner. They have been using SLDS grant funds to link employment data with their education data warehouse.
- Connecticut is developing new early warning system to identify characteristics associated with future performance and students in Grades 1-6 who may need extra support. It is rolling out on a pilot basis in the next few months. It was suggested that a follow-up conversation be scheduled to share details with other states.
- Maine is in the process of creating a new data warehouse, and is tracking chronic absenteeism for the first time this year. Other measures of interest lately at the DOE are student mobility and per-pupil spending.
- None of the states collect student SSNs, except for CTE students.

Overall themes of the meeting were simplifying the reporting demands and definitions: states agree that we should not collect data we are not going to report, and we should use the same definitions as those in federal guidelines that states use for ESSA reporting wherever possible.



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Business transitioned to a discussion of the Procedural Guidebook. Extended discussion ensued.

- College enrollment cohorts and institution types: After discussion, the group recommended a number of changes to the College Enrollment data:
 1. Eliminate the “Early Enrollment in Postsecondary” and the “Later Enrollment” indicators.
 2. Change the definition of “Immediate Enrollment” to within 16 months after high school graduation (the federal reporting guideline). This will capture ‘gap year’ students.
 3. Eliminate the separate College Enrollment and Persistence categories for 2-Year Institutions and 4-Year Institutions. Combine and report all enrollments -- regardless of institution type -- together.

Lauren Leigh Hinthorne and Lisa Plimpton agreed to think through any implications of how these changes will affect our other measures and how to note the changes in the Data Report, and report back to the group.

- New Hampshire proposed adding a new measure: College Completion within 8 Years. The group agreed to explore this idea and consider it for the 2019 report.
- Craig Weller explained the methodology Massachusetts uses to identify economically disadvantaged students: Since a significant number of schools now have Community Eligibility for school meals, there is less incentive for schools and parents to complete the National School Lunch Program paperwork. Since 2015, the Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services has matched student records with SNAP, TANF, foster care, and Medicaid databases, and the DOE uses these results to flag students as economically disadvantaged (ED). This has resulted in about two-thirds as many students categorized as ED, compared with using free and reduced-price lunch eligibility, the method used in the other five states. Connecticut noted that they also compare student records with DHHS databases, and only about 50% of students currently identified as ED are matched. Most of the other states also conduct these HHS database comparisons, and use them to directly certify students for free school meals. [Children living in families with incomes up to 133% of poverty are eligible for Medicaid in MA, compared with an income threshold of reduced-price school meals of 185% of poverty.] We will note this in the NESSC Data Report.
- “Other” Gender category: CT and MA both have a “non-binary” gender category that schools can report, but the student numbers are very small and neither state is reporting them yet. NESSC will defer consideration of adding this category to our data template until states start publicly reporting the data.
- CT and VT both have students who do not graduate from high school but do complete some other program/qualification. The question was raised whether these students are/should be included in the dropout rate. Lauren Leigh Hinthorne and Lisa Plimpton will work with the states to clarify this point and add a notation to the Report as needed.
- Since the original NESSC goal date of 2016 has passed, we should ask the State Leads and Council to revisit the goals and/or the target date, and reflect that in the Procedural Guidebook and Annual Data Report.



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Discussion moved to the matter of NESSC reporting race/ethnicity data. The following highlights the exchange and recommended direction:

- The group decided to align our Race/Ethnicity categories with the Federal guidelines. This means eliminating the separate Ethnicity category of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic, and including Hispanic as a seventh option among the racial groups. The seven groups should encompass 100% of students. NESSC will collect data for all 7 race/ethnicity groups. Any single-category values lower than 12—New Hampshire's N for data suppression, the highest of the six states—will be suppressed.
- For reporting purposes, we will explore combining some of the smaller race/ethnicity groups and/or reporting White and Non-white.
- After discussion and voting by all states but Connecticut, the group agreed to include race/ethnicity data in this year's Data Report.
- GSP staff Lauren Leigh and Lisa offered to create a couple of charts with last year's race data so we can try to uncover any problems or issues ahead of time.
- Discussion also touched on what point in time is used for reporting race. For graduation data, most states count students race as reported at the time of graduation.

The Data Team reviewed the new data template:

- The group discussed using Google Drive for sharing the state data templates in the format of Google Sheets. Questions: Do states need Gmail e-mail addresses to edit Google Sheets? Ensure that we set up file sharing permissions correctly.
- In the High School graduation section, add a row for the cohort adjustment (transfers in and out) for each cohort.
- There was a brief discussion of the fact that we collect data on a 5-year high school graduation cohort, but do not report it.

The meeting turned to a review of the proposed 2018 Timeline leading to the publishing of the 2018 NESSC Data Report. The Timeline is attached to this Meeting Summary.

- The data entry period will be March 12 to May 25 this year.
- Data Coordinator Lisa Plimpton will visit each state during this time to help with any data entry/platform issues or substantive data issues, and to learn more about how the Common Data Project could be more helpful in your work. We propose a two-hour meeting (depending on the agenda) at the state's convenience. Lisa will contact state data leads to schedule.
- Other important dates to note where state feedback is needed includes :
 1. Jan 29 – Feb 28: Review and comment on Data Table template
 2. July 20 – Aug 3: Review and comment on Draft Data Report
- The Data Report release is planned for August 24.

Lunch – 12:14 – 1:00PM



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

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Proposed Data Report Changes

The group discussed a number of ideas for changes aimed at improving the Data Report:

- The group sees “the public” as the larger audience for this report. Some users are interested in their state, and some are interested in the region. Several members reported that their legislatures and other organizations and agencies use it.
- There was consensus that adding cohort numbers (in addition to percentages) would be a helpful addition, and one member suggested adding them to each chart, rather than in an appendix.
- The group agreed with adding lines to the charts to show the NESSC goals, and adding interpretive text or subtitles.
- States all liked the idea of adding information/charts on equity gaps, including trends over time. Many said this is a primary interest at their Departments.
- States agreed that providing some context information on each state would be helpful. Suggestions included:
 - Student enrollment
 - Number of districts, Number of schools, Size of smallest and largest schools
 - Urban/suburban/rural figures (check out KidsCount definition)
 - Give space for states to highlight two or three facts or accomplishments

The group discussed where and how this information would fit, but did not reach a final decision.

- Rhode Island described a Tableau feature on their website that allows users to choose which postsecondary education data to view and how to display it. Lauren Leigh shared that Great Schools Partnership has a Tableau license, and states were excited about the idea of creating a NESSC Tableau data site where users could manipulate the data. Several of the states do not have Tableau licenses, but would love to be able to create visualizations with their NESSC data. Several members agreed that this option would be more useful to many users than the printed report.

There was no New Business to be considered and the meeting adjourned at 2:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Plimpton, NESSC Data Coordinator