

Two Views with One Vision: Improving Schools through a Focus on 21st Century Skills



College Board Forum

Houston, Texas

November 6, 2008



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What is NEASC?

- Founded in 1885, the first and oldest of 6 regional accrediting agencies
- All 6 Commissions governed by a single Executive Board
- Singular in serving kindergarten through university in one association
- Exec. Office conducts research, contributes to public policy and works with national ministries (China, Thailand, South Africa, U.A.E. and others)
- Serves more than 2,000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities in CT, ME, MA, NH, RI and VT
- Serves international schools *worldwide* (over 170 in 70 nations), many with CIS.

What is CBIA?

- Statewide business and industry association with 10,000 member companies—every size and sector
- One of largest statewide business associations in country
- Education Foundation established in 1983 focused on public-private partnerships in education and job training

Employer Concerns about Future

- Employers, based on national and state surveys, extremely concerned about preparation of graduates for employment
- National Business Roundtable states:
 - World economy places premium on use of intellectual skills to maintain competitive edge
 - International marketplace for talent
 - Demand in U.S. exceeding supply of qualified graduates especially in STEM fields
 - U.S. no longer world leader in high school and college graduation rates

2008 CBIA Member Survey

- 82% of respondents said their company has experienced difficulty finding qualified workers within their industry
- Employee skills most in demand are:
 - Technical, mechanical, manufacturing related
 - Professional or “soft skills” such as teamwork, communication and leadership
 - Overall employability skills such as positive work ethic and punctuality
 - Advanced computer, scientific, research and development and engineering skills

Persistent Headlines

- Since SCANS Report in 1991 through today
- Michigan Businesses Dissatisfied with Graduates (Alliance for Excellent Education)
- Global Economy Demands New Skills (Education Week, September, 2008)
- States Press Ahead on “21st Century Skills” (Education Week, October, 2008)

Sample 21st Century Skills – As identified by the Partnership for 21st Century skills

- Information and communication skills
- Thinking and problem-solving skills, including critical thinking, systems thinking, creativity and intellectual curiosity
- Interpersonal and self-direction skills: collaboration, adaptability, social responsibility
- Civic literacy
- Global awareness

Challenges to Overcome

- Business complaining from outside has had little impact on culture and expectations in schools
- School structures and belief systems still sort students; inappropriate for time when all students need to master higher level 21st Century skills—new name, same problems
- Concerns that higher standards and expectations for all students will leave too many behind rather than raise achievement for all

The Business Community remains dissatisfied with the learning and skills of graduates.



Achievement Gaps in CT

- CT Mastery Test scores are flat
- No improvement in scores from 2001-06
- On 2007 10th grade CAPT, state goals were met by only:
 - 58 percent of White students
 - 18 percent of Hispanic students
 - 15 percent of Black students

Remediation in Connecticut Community Colleges and Connecticut State University

- In fall 2005, nearly 20,000 students enrolled in remedial English or math courses
- The estimated annual cost of remedial courses is \$10.8 million
- In some community colleges; 80 percent of entering freshmen are in at least one remedial course
- Over half these students don't obtain degrees

Colleges too...

Colleges continue to demonstrate dissatisfaction with the preparedness of students by placing 40% of all college students in at least one remedial course, with 60% of all two-year college students in at least one such course.

ACT Study 2006:

All students need the same skills, no matter the path chosen: college or work.



What Must be Done

- 2007 McKinsey & Co. Report: “How the World’s Best Performing Schools School Systems Come Out on Top” (OECD-PISA)
- Cites teachers, teachers, teachers as critical
- Teacher quality is key determinant of student success in schools systems around world

If colleges and businesses are both concerned about the preparation of high school students-- need to work together around reform initiatives--secondary school accreditation standards can help

NEASC's Commission on Public Secondary Schools has made a commitment to the development of 21st century skills for work or college in member schools in all six New England states.



Secondary School Accreditation in New England

- A school improvement process that focuses on best practices shown to improve student learning
- Requires continuous demonstration of improvement

NEASC Standards

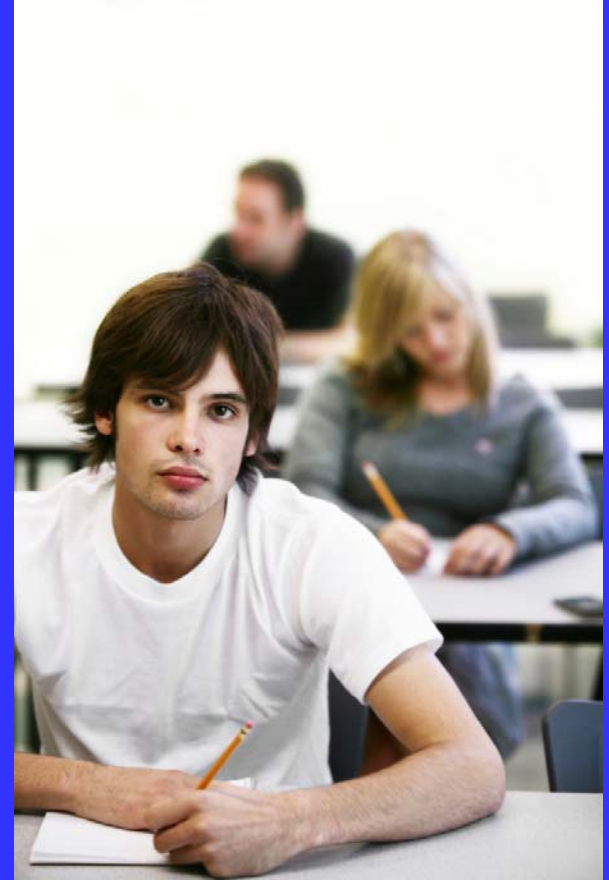
Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations calls for a school-wide commitment to 21st century learning expectations in academic, civic, and social areas – with rubrics.

Standard on Curriculum

- Must ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve school-wide 21st century skills
- Requires schools to demonstrate that all students are engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, critical thinking, and the authentic application of knowledge and skills
- Pushes schools to integrate student learning

Standard on Assessment

Must have a local assessment system that ensure formative and summative assessments of ALL students' achievement of such learning goals



Struggles

- School-wide goals viewed as add-ons, not as essentials
- Viewed as in competition with content – no time
- Schools take initial steps to commit to such learning, but aren't driven by them
- Schools not looking at preparation for business; think college prep only matters



Schools and communities need to:

- Convey importance of whole school commitment to these skills
- Ask for formative and summative results
- Include results in public school profiles
- Discuss the skills with local businesses
- Meet with colleges to discuss necessary skills
 - look at data of student performance

Schools and communities need to:

- Meet with schools of education - teachers and school leaders - about importance of cross-cutting skills
- Use businesses as partners—curriculum content and external supports for teachers and students to reinforce academic subjects
- Meet with State Departments of Education to refocus on depth and application of knowledge

Education/Business Partnerships

- Learning can be more effectively achieved through partnerships with business and industry, civic and community organizations
- Many students need real world experiences to understand value of subjects they must study:
 - Job Shadowing, internships, industry visits and speakers in classrooms
 - Faculty externships

How Can Business Help?

- Continue to advocate for higher standards and accountability in nation's schools
- Support efforts to recruit best and brightest into teaching—through traditional and non-traditional programs
- Support state and local efforts to help teachers develop into effective instructors
- Provide new and current teachers with variety of work-based experiences

Results

- Better college and work readiness
- Less remediation in college
- Changed school cultures – fewer isolated content silos
- Teachers more propelled by student needs than content coverage

Questions?



Comments?