

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

(i) The State’s participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)

- (a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and
- (b) Includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — (20 points)

- (a) For Phase 1 applications, the State’s high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or
- (b) For Phase 2 applications, the State’s adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.¹

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

¹ Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.

Evidence for (B)(1)(i):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.
- A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
- Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
- The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(B)(1)(i) *Participation in a Consortium of States.* In 2002, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont agreed to work together to develop common standards (Appendix B-1), which led to the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). These assessments have been developed from one common set of K-12 standards, which are internationally benchmarked. Two studies completed by Achieve, Inc. for the Rhode Island Department of Education detail their alignment to world-class college and career readiness standards (Appendix B-2).

Since 2005, NECAP assessments have been administered to all students in the three states in reading and mathematics (grades 3-8) and in writing (grades 5 and 8). Since 2007, NECAP assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing have been administered to all students in grade 11. The lag in implementation was due to the need for more time to ensure that the curriculum standards upon which the high school assessment was based addressed the New England region's high expectations for college and career readiness. Since its inception, the three states have also reached consensus on science assessment targets in grades 4, 8 and 11 (Appendix B-3), covering essential scientific domains including life, earth-space and physical science and the science process skills including inquiry. In 2009, Maine joined the New England common assessment consortium at grades 3-8 for reading, writing and mathematics and the NECAP states are in discussions with Connecticut and Massachusetts about expanding this consortium.

The NECAP states have formalized this arrangement in each state's contract with the assessment vendor. A copy of the contract and the scope of services, as evidence of this collaboration, are in Appendix B-4. Whenever decisions need to be made around setting tri-state common performance standards, the NECAP Commissioners come together and reach consensus. To this date they have never lowered NECAP's standards even when faced with less than desirable results. Their goal has always been to improve instruction in order to increase student learning and enable students to reach world-class standards.

The New Department of Education, along with 50 other states and territories, is also participating in a joint effort by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in partnership with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board to develop a common core of state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 (see

draft standards in Appendix B-5). These standards, when final, are designed to be college- and career-ready and internationally benchmarked (see Appendix B-6). They will also be aligned with college and work expectations, and include rigorous content and skills. The New Hampshire Department of Education staff reviewed the first draft of the College- and Career-Ready Core Standards released in September 2009 and submitted comments on the draft Common Core Standards K-12 and learning progressions for English language arts and mathematics released in mid-November 2009.

(B)(1)(ii) Commitment to and Progress Toward Adopting a Common Set of K-12 Standards.

RSA 193-C:3 gives the Commissioner of Education the authority to “develop and implement” an improvement and assessment program. The Commissioner is instructed to do so in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the legislative oversight committee, and to seek the input of stakeholders. Once the final version of the Common Core Standards K-12 is published, the Commissioner will begin the process of review and implementation, pursuant to the requirements of RSA 193-C. Administrative rulemaking and legislative action are not required to adopt the Common Core.

At least three months will be needed to disseminate the standards and receive input from stakeholders. The process will begin with a thorough review of the Common Core Standards by the four-state NECAP consortium. NH’s review process will also include posting a link to the Common Core on the New Hampshire Department of Education Web site, presenting the new standards at meetings of professional organizations and obtaining feedback, presenting them to the House and Senate Education Committees, and holding focus groups for specific audiences.

The final steps will be a presentation of the NECAP consortium recommendations and input from stakeholders to the State Board of Education and the Improvement and Assessment Legislative Oversight Committee (RSA 193-C:7). While NH is hopeful that the process can be completed before August 2, 2010, it is committed to completing the process within six months of the publication of the final version of the Common Core Standards for K-12.

Building on the process used and experienced gained during the 2003 NECAP roll-out, NH will replicate this strategy to implement the Common Core. Prior to the release of the Common Core, NECAP states will broadly disseminate information to build knowledge and awareness by planning regional stakeholder meetings to introduce the Common Core; broadcasting email directly to district superintendents; addressing the Common Core in all speaking opportunities; and soliciting comments from educators and content specialists within the state through a common core website. Upon release of the Common Core standards, NECAP states will complete a gap analysis between Common Core and NECAP standards and share grade-level standards with the State Board, all stakeholders and the public at large via website, broadcast and electronic news service, and in-person public forums for comment and input.

Timeline for Implementing the Common Core

| Activity | Date |
|---|--------------------------|
| NHDOE staff will map core standards with other NECAP states against existing standards, highlighting differences and making sure they are equal to or more rigorous than current state standards. | January – March 30, 2010 |
| NHDOE staff will plan regional stakeholder meetings to introduce the Common Core and receive input. | March – May 2010 |
| NHDOE staff will make recommendation to the State Board of Education on adoption of standards. | June or July 2010 |
| The State Board of Education will post proposed standards and accept public comments for 60 days. Key constituencies, i.e., educators, unions, community groups, business and parents will be invited to comment in public forums and online. | June or July 2010 |
| The State Board of Education will meet and consider adoption of final draft of standards incorporating public feedback, publish standards to public record and distribute to LEAs, teacher training programs and the public. | August or September 2010 |
| NHDOE will develop crosswalks for LEAs and the public that clearly show old and new standards and differences. | Summer 2010 |
| NHDOE will conduct regional information sessions to instruct key constituencies on new standards and to answer questions. | Fall 2010 |
| NHDOE will support LEA efforts to align standards to curriculum and pedagogy. | School Year 2010-11 |

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State's consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State's plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(B)(2)(i) *Jointly Developing and Implementing Common, High-Quality Assessments*. In 2002 the New England states of New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont agreed to work together to develop common standards leading to the development of a New England common assessment. Thus was born the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). The NECAP states issued a common request for proposals for a testing contractor, which was developed with the technical assistance and support of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (The Center for Assessment). Since the beginning of this consortium, the states agreed to use The Center for Assessment as an ongoing technical advisor. Center staff facilitates management meetings and guides every technical decision related to developing the assessment program.

NECAP's assessment designs are recognized for high standards enforced by rigorous cut scores, and challenging tests that include a substantial extended constructed response format that represents more than 50 percent of the total possible score. Extensive use of constructed response as opposed to multiple choice has been proven to provide educators with a more substantial and relevant evaluation of a student's knowledge and skills. Constructed response engages students in applying learning to new situations, explaining their thinking, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the material—asking students to respond with a greater depth of knowledge as indicated by Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge model (Webb, N., 2005). The NECAP standards and assessment framework has received praise for rigor and quality. For a variety of reasons, including results, NECAP has been cited as “the best example of an assessment/accountability consortium to date” (see Appendix B-7 for *State Assessment Collaborative: Lessons from the New England Common Assessment Program*, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2009).

In 2008, three NECAP states (Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont) were three of only four states nationally to show significant gains in math achievement in both the fourth and eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Clearly, the performance of teachers and administrators in aligning curriculum and pedagogy to teach the standards, using NECAP assessments as a critical data element, is the major element in this success.

Maine became the fourth NECAP state in 2009. States participating in NECAP extended their collaboration as The New England Compact which received research funding from USED to look at “students in the gap,” multiple groups of students whose abilities and skills are not fairly or accurately reflected on large-scale, statewide assessments. This research project entitled, Reaching Students in the Gaps and the Enhanced Assessment Project showed promise for the use of technology in adaptive assessment, while also drawing attention to the impact of quality classroom instruction on proficiency.

Building on this robust, productive collaboration, NECAP is seeking to broaden its reach by partnering with Massachusetts and Connecticut. Once finalized, this expanded consortium will apply for funding from the USED for its assessment development and implementation plan, with a focus on summative assessments that utilize constructive response and writing prompts and will seek to develop and pilot high-quality common interim assessments to track progress toward learning goals throughout the school year.

(B)(2)(ii) *Joining with a Significant Number of States.* In addition, NH along with 29 other states has agreed to participate in the Balanced Assessment Consortium. This group will focus on assessments that are grounded in a standards-based curriculum and managed as part of a tightly integrated system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction and teacher development. The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration for states in supporting assessment of the common core standards. The work will include multiple measures of learning and performance, new technologies, teacher involvement in development and scoring of assessments and a common reference exam which includes selected-response, constructed-response and performance components aimed at higher order thinking skills linked to the common core (see Appendix B-8 for the Memorandum of Understanding and B-9 for list of member states). NH elected to join this group in order to enhance its current NECAP assessment program and build on and share the experiences gained through collaboration among four New England states (see Appendix B-10 for *The New England Common Assessment Program: Notes on the Collaboration Among Four New England States*).

NH has also joined a Consortium on Board Examination Systems with 12 other states. Its work is directed at greatly raising the proportion of high school students who leave high school ready to do college work by adopting a system based on international best practice aligns. NH will be piloting it in at least eight high schools across the state (see Appendix B-10 for MOU).

Reform Plan Criteria

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State’s institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

| <p>Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.</p> | <p>Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)</p> | <p>End of SY 2010-2011</p> | <p>End of SY 2011-2012</p> | <p>End of SY 2012-2013</p> | <p>End of SY 2013-2014</p> |
|--|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <p>(Enter measures here, if any.)</p> | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

NH has already begun analyzing the NGA/CCSSO developed Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. The State agency divisions listed on the plan above have been working with the NECAP group to assess the Learning Progressions (as much as has been available) and the College- and Career-Ready Standards with respect to NECAP Standards. They are setting up matrices noting the differences and will use these materials as stakeholders from the field are brought into the process. Meanwhile, the NH P-16 Council is undergoing its own review, as is the NH Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Supervisors, connected to the NH School Administrators Association (NHSAA). It is projected that this work will come together in the spring, when, in tandem with the NH State Board of Education, the adoption process will begin in earnest. Over the last six months, the NHDoe has been engaged in meetings, conversations and negotiations that have led to agreement to join three national assessment consortia, beyond the NECAP four-state group. Conversations continue as to whether the gains and findings made under NECAP can be applied within a larger Consortium. NH has formally joined the Balanced Assessment Consortium, the ACHIEVE-led Comparing Student Performance on Common College- and Career-Ready Standards Consortium, and the Board Examination/Move On When Ready Consortium, and will assess appropriateness, over time, based on our experience with NECAP, as well as evidence of student gains.

In addition, the state's alternative assessment system is undergoing revision and these plans were recently reviewed by the USED for feasibility. NH's Alternative Assessment system has been going through an alignment process based on newly developed learning progressions that link to grade-level standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Eight school districts have signed on to the Board Examination Pilot. A general presentation of the Consortium has been made on several occasions in the last two years by Marc Tucker and other representatives of the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE). On January 12, 2010, representatives from Cambridge University, Pearson EDEXCEL, ACT/Quality Core, International Baccalaureate and the College Board presented to over 100 superintendents, principals and college representatives. Individual LEAs are now evaluating the various systems and making an initial selection for piloting purposes based on a match with the characteristics of their district and the qualities of the given board exam system. Districts will be asked to declare

in the spring as to which system they wish to pilot, so that plans for substantial professional development can be made for the summer and coming school year. Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester NH has hosted these meetings and is committed to becoming a collaborative external partner for one or more of the board exam systems. The NHDOE has chosen not to make a forced choice among these various programs, looking to see the evidence brought on by piloted implementation. NH will be looking to the USED for waivers for regulations regarding state assessment procedures as these pilots begin, targeted for the second and third year of the RttT grant (school year 2011-2012). It is anticipated that a national evaluation process will take place in conjunction with NCEE in the fourth year of the grant to assess the pilots, student gains and the effect on curriculum, instruction and assessment design, for the purposes of decision making regarding going to scale with the Board Examination model. Part of this evaluation will also be to look at various methods and protocols of implementation, comparing and contrasting the pros and cons of the various systems piloted and the feasibility for large scale implementation.

At the local level, the NHDOE has been working with districts, district and school leaders and consultants in the implementation of the competency requirements for high school credit attainment. The NH State Board of Education in the Fall of 2009 approved a validation system for high school competencies, to be constructed this spring. Funded by a Nellie Mae Education Foundation grant, this effort will set up a meta-rubric to assess high school course level competencies for rigor, definition of mastery, accessibility and connection to the NECAP (and eventually, the Common Core) standards and state curriculum frameworks. School competency systems will be assessed over the next year as to whether they meet proficiency against the meta-rubric, through a process to be designed in connection to the NHDOE's School Approval Process. At this same time, a rigorous reliability and validity study will be conducted by Dr. Douglas Reeves to examine high school level competencies attained through extended learning opportunities outside the classroom. This process is designed to create a state level moderation process for performance assessments connected to extended learning in order to ensure consistency and rigor. The New England Secondary School Consortium and the NECAP assessment directors are looking for ways to build out from NECAP and identify a variety of ways to accomplish performance assessment. There is high interest in greater integration of 21st

Century skill assessment as part of both formative and summative assessment models.

Performance assessment is the vehicle selected as most suited to this expectation.

Key members of the State Board of Education, the Professional Standards Board and the NH Council for Teacher Education have been meeting and evaluating teacher preparation programs' program of studies, curricula and instructional practices to determine whether they are keeping pace with the advancements being made in the field of K-12 education. The review and approval process of teacher preparation programs is under a process of overhaul, in order to become more relevant to current district expectations.

It is expected that much of the work discussed above will become the basis for substantial, large scale professional development of teachers and leaders, particularly for those involved in the High School Transformation Network being created under RttT. This Network will focus on bringing to scale the alignment of NECAP, and classroom formative assessments and performance measures. This work will be building on two years of a Nellie Mae Education Foundation grant involving 14 high schools, where a well documented system for performance assessment connected to extended learning was piloted and found to be successful. As schools look to follow the State's lead in creating multiple pathways to graduation, they are signing on to this and the other innovative practices discussed above. It is anticipated that under RttT a nationally recognized leader in the field of HS Redesign will lead the expansion of this network to reach into all 80 NH high schools, pressing changes in school calendars, scheduling, teacher contracts and methods of instruction and assessment, all aimed at freeing up our HS methodologies to approximate ways students are already learning in the digital age. This work will be supported by the Pembroke Academy-led SAKAI Network of schools that are adopting a digitized student portfolio and instructional platform and the innovative on-line, on-demand instructional system being designed by the Mascenic/New England College group.

| Goals | Activities | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure comparability of locally managed and scored assessment components. | Create oversight/moderation/audit systems. | August 2010 – December 2011 | Division of Program Support and Bureau of Accountability |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that teacher and leader education and development infuse knowledge of learning, curriculum and assessment. | Continue and expand priority initiatives including: RtI, standards and assessment revision cycles, instructional coaching, leadership, content specific professional development, Math Science Partnership projects, OPEN NH on-line professional development, NE Arts Assessment Institute. | February 2010 – September 2014 | Division of Program Support and Division of Instruction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement high-quality professional learning focused on examination of student work, curriculum and assessment development and moderated scoring. | <p>Provide training through Performance Plus initiative, competency-based assessment work, assessment literacy training, and NE Secondary School Consortium.</p> <p>Develop additional professional development opportunities to engage extended grade ranges and more teachers and leaders.</p> | | Division of Program Support and Division of Instruction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align curriculum, assessment and instructional practices with Common Core standards. | Deploy school improvement coaches to LEAs and schools to assist with alignment of local curriculum to Common Core Standards and adapt and/or augment curriculum materials as needed. | September 2010 – August 2012 | Division of Instruction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate formative assessments into the curriculum, organized around the standards, curriculum and learning sequences to inform teaching and student learning. | Provide regional professional development sessions in partnership with NH School Administrators Association, NH Principals Association, institutes of higher education, regional PD centers and the Dept. of Education. | September 2010 September 2014 | Commissioner of Education NH School Administrators Association and their regional Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment group |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement a valid and reliable assessment system. | Contract with outside assessment developer. | June 2010 – June 2012 | Bureau of Accountability |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise teacher preparation program approval standards to align with Common Core Standards. | Convene the Professional Standards Board and Council for Teacher Education to examine existing teacher preparation program approval standards to determine degree of alignment with the Common Core Standards and teacher and principal effectiveness standards (see Section D). | September 2010 – September 2012 | Division of Instruction, Division of Program Support, Professional Standards Board and the Council of Teacher Education |