

New Skills for Youth Phase One Snapshot: New Hampshire

The goal of New Hampshire's career readiness work is to increase postsecondary attainment to increase the economic success of the state and its citizens. The state team used its New Skills for Youth (NSFY) Phase One grant period to build on existing innovations in locally driven competency-based education (CBE) systems. The team began work to incorporate a new definition of high-quality career pathways into the state's existing CBE accountability system and focused on preparing career pathway travelers and leveraging the state's existing Career Pathways System.

Foundations for the Work

New Hampshire has made significant progress in reforming its career preparation systems over the last five years as a way to improve economic opportunities for all students and achieve a statewide college attainment goal of 65 percent of the population by 2025. The state has built new K-12 career pathways in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) sectors and implemented guided pathways at the state's seven community colleges. These postsecondary pathways lay out structured and detailed academic maps to help students complete their degrees on time.

New Hampshire is one of the only states in the country to launch a statewide system of CBE in secondary schools. In 2005, the state enacted [rule changes](#) to legislation to begin the

transition to granting course credit for proficiency rather than seat time, and full implementation occurred by 2008. This system has been incorporated in New Hampshire's accountability system through the Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) program. While the state is thoroughly engaged in the design and structure of the CBE programs, implementation is owned and driven by local leaders, who are empowered to shape the programs to meet their school contexts and students' needs.

With this foundation, the state entered NSFY knowing the many components of the statewide career pathways system were just loosely connected. The state NSFY team was aware of innovative and effective strategies happening in certain regions of the state and wanted to scale those pockets of excellence so

Phase One of JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s New Skills for Youth grant began in May 2016 and went through October 2016. With bold visions for improving career readiness in K-12 education, each Phase One state spent the grant period performing a diagnostic assessment of their career preparation system and preparing for implementation of a new action plan. This snapshot describes New Hampshire's experience in Phase One, including promising practices and innovations.

students can more fully engage in the statewide system.

Work during Phase One

New Hampshire's NSFY team worked with an external reviewer to conduct an assessment of the state's career preparation systems. The state team also conducted a review of student enrollment and outcomes data related to Career Technical Education (CTE) and career preparation.

Based on the state's identified areas of strength and opportunities for growth, the team created a three-year strategic plan, which aligns with and further supports the state's ongoing work aimed at achieving a 65 percent college attainment rate by 2025. Specifically, the team created strategies to increase enrollment in STEM fields, as STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17.3 percent over the next 10 years in New Hampshire, yet only 11 percent of CTE concentrators currently are studying in STEM-related fields.

The team designed strategies for more effectively aligning the state's workforce and education systems by leveraging data. This effort includes focusing increasing capacity for effective career advising and expanding PACE to CTE programs.

Career Pathways and Accountability

Early in Phase One, the Career Pathways Group emerged as a collaboration hub for career pathways innovation. The group includes leaders from eight state career pathways initiatives, philanthropic partners and state agencies, including the New Hampshire

New Hampshire's Career Pathways Definition

High-quality educational experiences that span secondary and postsecondary systems, blend rigorous core academic and career-technical instruction, offer focused career guidance and advisement systems, include high-quality work-based learning experiences, and culminate in postsecondary or industry credentials and significantly expand student access to, participation in, and successful completion of those pathways.

Charitable Foundation, the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH), the Department of Education (DOE), and the state's Sector Partnership Initiative, among others.

One of the Career Pathways Group's first tasks involved creating and generating statewide approval for a definition of high-quality career pathways and a career pathways system. The Group created and vetted the definitions with the member organizations, and in June the Group formally approved them.

With the career pathways definition approved and endorsed, the state NSFY team then focused on including the measurement of high-quality career pathways in the state's PACE system. The team developed a timeline and an action plan for a pilot program beginning in fall 2017 that will implement PACE assessments in CTE programs. These assessments will measure student competency in specific CTE programs and technical skills. The pilot will begin in automotive technology and health sciences programs in districts currently using PACE for other K-12 programs. Participating CTE teachers will collaborate to develop competency-based performance assessments for each domain of competency attainment. DOE staff will organize the pilot

activities and assist as requested, and the state's Center for Assessment will check the performance tasks for validity and reliability.

Engaging Guidance Counselors

One challenge in New Hampshire, and across the country, is a lack of high school student awareness of career options. Seeing this challenge as a barrier to increasing career readiness for students, the state NSFY team capitalized on engagement with guidance counselors during Phase One. The team created a School Counselor Strand for Career Readiness and Pathways.

The state hosted four regional meetings during Phase One, allowing counselors and local employer partners to come together and discuss career readiness trends and the economic employment directions of New Hampshire. These meetings also provided opportunities for counselors to visit employer sites and community colleges to see career and college readiness in action.

Guidance counselors used their participation in the Strand team to begin thinking about ways to increase awareness and improve perceptions of career preparation options. Some early ideas include highlighting the many CTE programs that offer college credit and making sure that all counselors are fully informed about the state's economic and

workforce needs and are able to share those needs with students and parents in a clear way.

Looking Ahead

The state NSFY team will continue to focus on its overarching goal of increasing New Hampshire's postsecondary attainment rate. The team's next step is to enlist a small but diverse cohort of schools and districts to pilot the Career Pathways School concept. These schools will evaluate their systems, policies, practices, and outcomes in areas critical for preparing students to be career pathway travelers. Those areas include industry engagement, postsecondary connections and preparation, personalized career guidance, work-based learning experiences, among others. Then with support, these schools will develop action plans for rounding out their systems. These schools will serve as innovation labs and proof points to refine the Career Pathways School concept.

Many successful improvement initiatives in New Hampshire start with a small coalition of willing partners who lead the learning and development. Once the improvement value becomes clear, other partners join the effort and reinvent the innovation to mesh with their local contexts. The NSFY team intends to employ this reliable strategy to spur every New Hampshire high school to attain the Career Pathways School designation.