Table of Contents

Priorities

The **NETWORK** project addresses Absolute Priority 3: Innovations that Complement the Implementation of High Standards and High-Quality Assessments. Under this priority, the Department provides funding for practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to support States' efforts to transition to standards and assessments that measure students' progress toward college- and career-readiness, including curricular and instructional practices, strategies, or programs in core academic subjects. The **NETWORK** will be developing new, common assessment tasks that are tied to state standards, and predictive of success on state assessments.

The **NETWORK** project addresses three competitive preference priorities.

- Competitive Preference Priority 6: Innovations that Support College Access and Success will be accomplished through the development of a program that prepares students for college in an environment of supportive adults that will provide guidance in the choices and projects developed by students.

- Competitive Preference Priority 7: Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students will be accomplished through the personalized approach that is the hallmark of NETWORK classrooms. This personalized approach will allow each student to develop and exhibit their growing knowledge and skills. Teams of students selected to develop personalized learning experiences will include students with special needs.

- Competitive Preference Priority 8: Innovations that Serve Schools in Rural LEAs will be accomplished by the focus on rural LEAs within the network. Rural LEAs include the Laconia, Milton, Newfound, and Pittsfield in New Hampshire, and MSAD #60 in North Berwick, Maine. The network structure, including the incorporated use of technology to facilitate communication, has been designed to meet the needs of rural schools and schools that are rural in nature.

Application Narrative

The Plymouth Public Schools are pleased to submit this application for funding under the *Investing in Innovation* competitive grant program. The **New England Network for Personalization and Performance (NETWORK)**, described in the following pages, represents a truly innovative approach to preparing and motivating students for postsecondary success. We envision a redesigned high school, a place where learning can happen anytime, anyplace; a place where students demonstrate learning through complex, rigorous performance assessments. Our redesigned high school is a place where teachers function more as facilitators and coaches of learning than as lecturers and dispensers of knowledge. Our hypothesis is: *A network of schools, working together to create authentic tasks and common rubrics to measure uncommon assessment tasks, will foster personalized learning resulting in higher student achievement, as demonstrated by lower dropout rates, higher graduation rates and demonstrable success after high school.* Our challenge (and the innovation) is to puzzle out how to transform existing, comprehensive high schools into schools where learning is personalized for all students in a replicable, cost-effective way. Our project builds on the promising work and proven results of the New York Performance Standards Consortium (Consortium), applying that work to new settings and with new populations.

The Consortium has found new ways of assessing and instructing students that have led to increased student achievement. The Consortium also has evidence that explicit, ongoing attention to a culture focused on personalizing learning in each school is a critical element for this success. As the narrative will illustrate, there is evidence from reported practice that strongly suggests the potential for efficacy in replication across our settings.

We define '*personalized learning*' as inquiry-based learning experiences that are under the control of the student, with guidance from adults. '*Common rubrics to measure uncommon assessment tasks*' are ways to encourage students to demonstrate learning in a wide variety of ways, while ensuring that they meet (or exceed) the state standards in each content area. For example, a common science rubric

may require students to properly describe variables in an experiment, though the experiment itself may take virtually any form, i.e. an uncommon assessment task.

The **New England Network for Personalization and Performance (NETWORK)** is made up of thirteen high schools (close to 11,000 students) across four New England states – Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. Many of the schools are rural, though we have also incorporated suburban and urban schools in the mix. All schools have voluntarily joined the effort, and represent a true continuum of experience, achievement, demographics, and geography. All possess a passion for improving their students' postsecondary success.

Matching funds and support for this project will be provided by the Nellie Mae Foundation (NEMF). The Nellie Mae Education Foundation focuses their grant support on the promotion and integration of student-centered approaches to learning at the middle- and high-school levels.

Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design

Students in NETWORK schools and across New England, like students everywhere, are not uniformly or sufficiently prepared for the challenges of post-secondary education and career pathways – including those who have met the high standards established for graduation across Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts. High School is a terminal education point for too many students, particularly in the more rural and isolated areas, where the percentage of high school graduates pursuing post-secondary education is roughly 60%. Graduation and college-going rates are rising across the area, though very slowly, less than 5% in the past ten years. Rural *and* urban areas across New England suffer from persistent poverty and lack of jobs.

Dropout rates are particularly high for students with special needs – the very population most in need of a structured pathway to success. New Hampshire's average dropout rate for students with special needs is 3.9%, though it is much higher in Milton (12.82%), Raymond (12%), Pittsfield (7.32%), Manchester (7%), and Newfound (6.76%). These network LEAs are typical of districts currently facing

drop-out rates that exceed the state average, with a 'gap' that is much higher for their most vulnerable students.

Network School Demographics, 2008-09 School Year

Network School	Enrollment (grades 9-12)	4 year Dropout Rate	% of Graduates Pursuing Post-Secondary Education*
New Hampshire	**64,392**	**6.7**	**73.6**
Kearsage Regional	642	2.9	83.8
Laconia HS**	764	6.2	56.1
Manchester West	1,375	13.9	77.7
Nute HS**	200	5.3	65.4
Nashua HS South	2,210	6.1	77.5
Nashua HS North	1,938	6.5	76.3
Newfound Regional**	464	7.3	62.7
Pittsfield**	181	10.6	34.9
Raymond	462	15.7	57.4
Vermont	**29,547**	**2.89**	**74.8**
Mt. Abraham Union HS	277	3.28	60.0
Maine	**418,375**	**5.17**	**64.6**
Noble High School	1,081		69.7
Massachusetts	**957,053**	**3.4**	**82.0**
Plymouth North HS	1,053	2.9	81.5
Plymouth South HS	1,489	3.5	81.0

* Percent of HS completers who entering two or four year colleges.
** Rural LEAs

Our network schools represent a wide variety of contexts and vary widely on their indicators of achievement. All are joined by a common desire to design and implement a personalized learning experience for their high school students, but some schools are much closer to realizing this reality than others. We view this as both a need and strength in this project, and will build in meaningful opportunities for peer mentoring among network schools, as well as with our outside partners.

In designing this project, we also looked to the needs of educators across the region. Teachers need time and support to evolve their own professional strategies into a coach/facilitator role. The issue of supportive professional development is exacerbated in small, rural schools that may not have access to the types of professional discussions and experts available in larger schools or urban centers.

As part of our proposal development, we conducted a survey across all participating network schools. Of the sample teachers that responded, 82% believe their students would work harder under a system of personalized learning; and 85% believe personalized learning would help their students connect classroom experiences to college and career opportunities. Only 25% believe they are skilled in the creation and implementation of personalized learning experiences and assessments.

Finally, we asked students what might help them be successful by conducting a survey across network schools.   Roughly 65% of students responding indicated they would work harder, be more active learners, and care more about their grades under a system of personalized learning. 73% said personalized learning could introduce them to college and career pathways that interest them. 66% indicated personalized learning would help them connect content with real life experiences and understand its' relevance.

The New England Region has a history of innovation in high school design.   Each network school exists within a unique state accountability system, and each system imparts somewhat different demands and opportunities on the schools themselves. The regional school accrediting body - The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) - requires high schools to engage in school wide conversations to identify expectations for student learning in academic, civic and social realms; establish school wide rubrics to assess these academic expectations and that all students participate in a program of study that affords each the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of those expectations. Accreditation also requires that schools be personalized so that each student is known well by at least one adult in the school building.

The innovative spirit in New England is also exemplified by the school approval rules in the State of New Hampshire. The mandate requires that course credit be earned only by demonstrating mastery of course competencies. In support of the new policy, the State of New Hampshire is currently piloting an Extended Learning Opportunity project in four districts to allow students to earn credit through a wide variety of ways not available in the typical high school setting.

These diverse circumstances have laid the groundwork for a network of high schools committed to taking the lead in forging a new model of secondary education. A model where learning and assessment are personalized for every student and achievement is measured by reliable and valid instruments aligned with state content area standards. This kind of schooling exists in a number of schools around the country, and has been well defined as both a network and model by the Consortium in a number of urban schools.
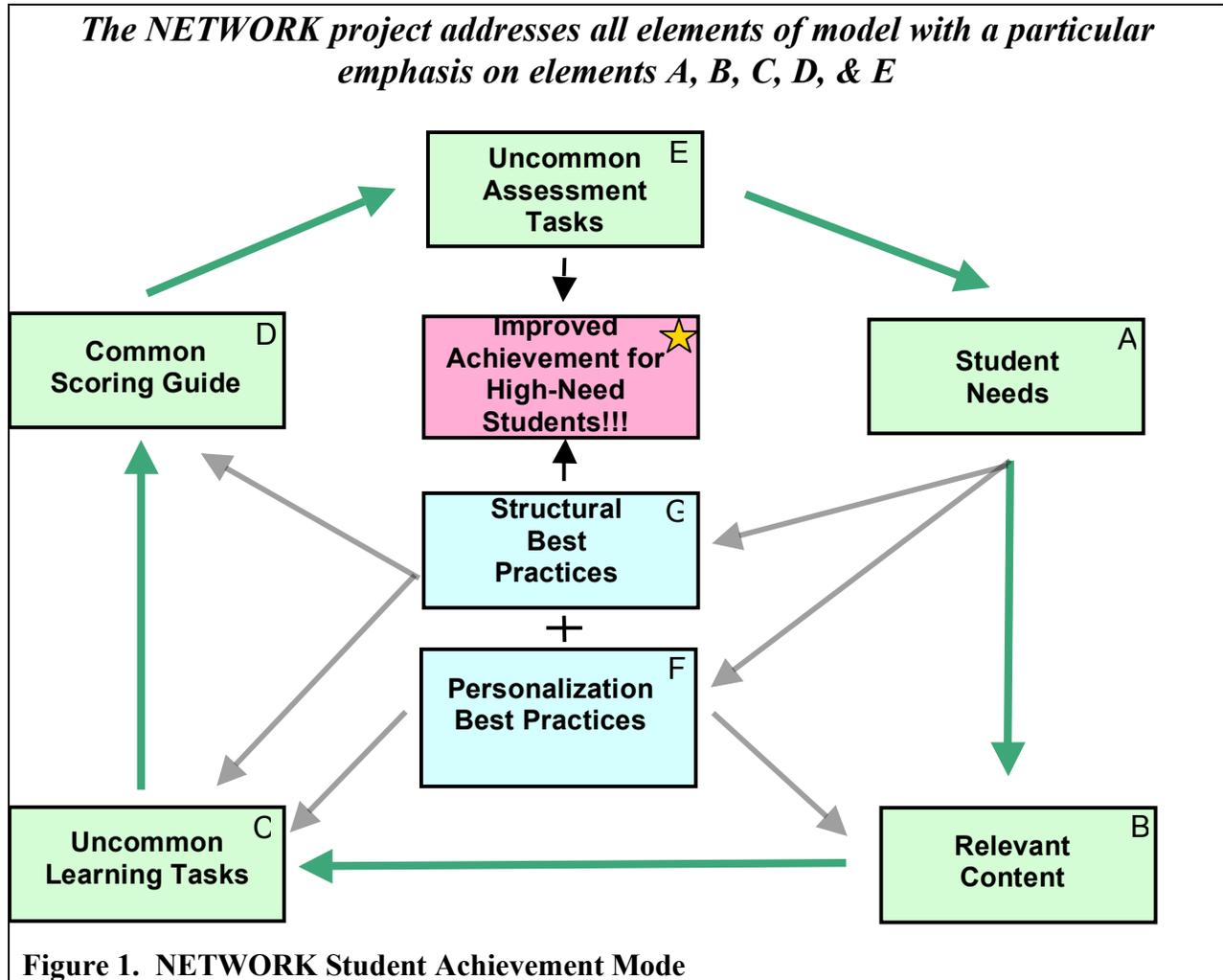
The overall goal of this project is to decrease the number of dropouts, and increase the number of students that graduate and leave Network high schools with the skills to be successful in their post-secondary endeavors (college or career). The model is visually depicted in Figure 1., illustrating how the diverse elements are interrelated in support of student success.

We have developed four interrelated activity strands that will support the success of all participants at all network schools, while building capacity and tracking success in multiple contexts:

- A collaborative, peer-mentored and mediated approach to professional development. School-based teams of teachers will work together to develop inquiry-based curricular units, developing related assessments and engage in the process of moderation study[1]. In a parallel process that emphasizes the student-centered and personalized approach to learning, teams of students will work together with a teacher facilitator to create personalized learning experiences and performance assessment experiences. The Consortium will provide peer mentors for network schools throughout this process.

- A change leadership team will be formed at each network school to shepherd the systemic change process needed to be successful in this endeavor. Schools will be supported in implementing things like flexible scheduling, student-led conferencing, personal learning plans, teacher collaboration, and authentic assessment. These are some of the structures that support the 'anytime, anywhere' personalized learning environments. This team will ensure needed cultural

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[1] *Moderation studies* employ a protocol to improve inter-rater reliability as common rubrics are developed and implemented.

shifts unfold in a way that is appropriate for each participating school and district. The Center for

Secondary School Redesign (CSSR) will provide change leadership direction and coaches for

each school and district throughout this process.

The NETWORK project addresses all elements of model with a particular emphasis on elements A, B, C, D, & E

Figure 1. NETWORK Student Achievement Mode

🔳 A Performance Assessment Review Board (PAR) will be formed, made up of nationally

recognized experts to make visits to the network schools, observe and participate in student

presentations, interview students, and teachers, and review faculty documentation. This expert

review process is modeled after the very successful PAR Board that collaborates with the

Consortium and will provide valuable feedback from 'outside eyes' to all participants. Melissa

Roderick, Co-Director of the Consortium on Chicago School Research will serve as chair of the

PAR Board. Michelle Fine, of CUNY and Ron Wolk, of Education Week (both of whom serve
on the PAR Board for the Consortium) have agreed to participate on the NETWORK PAR Board.

- A Project Steering Committee will be formed to oversee the project, including monitoring
progress towards goals and adherence to the timeline and budget. This committee will also be
responsible for facilitating internal, intra-network communication *and* external dissemination and
communication.

Long-Term Outcome. By the end of the fifth project year, every student in every network school
will have participated in at least two personalized, inquiry-based learning experiences and demonstrated
mastery of knowledge and skills through performance assessment (and some will have participated in
more). All schools will require students to demonstrate proficiency in each content area as a condition of
graduation. Students experiencing and participating in these uncommon learning and assessment tasks
(with common scoring) will have a much greater likelihood of graduation and success in college and
career.

Strength of Research, Significance of Effect and Magnitude of Effect

Our hypothesis is: *A network of schools, working together to create authentic tasks and common
rubrics to measure uncommon assessment tasks, will foster personalized learning resulting in higher
student achievement, as demonstrated by lower dropout rates, higher graduation rates and demonstrable
success after high school.*   Our project builds on the promising work and proven results of the New York
Performance Standards Consortium (Consortium), applying that work to new settings and with new
populations. Theory and reported practice strongly suggest the potential for efficacy with the participants
and settings we will be focused on.

The Consortium schools are defined by inquiry-based learning and complex, performance-based
assessments. Four specific performance tasks are required of all students for graduation – an analytic
literary essay, a social studies research paper, an original science experiment, and the application of

higher-level mathematics. Assignments are graded with detailed rubrics, tied to state standards; with

added accountability provided through an external evaluation and review. Performance on these tasks is

reflected on student transcripts and results are used for college admission.

Schmoker (2009) discusses the relationship between data-driven decision making and the use of

standardized tests, arguing that schools (and students) could make significant gains on standardized tests

without engaging in any intellectually challenging tasks. This may explain the relatively stagnant NAEP

scores, and the large percentage of college students requiring remedial coursework. He goes on to cite the

Consortium schools as a model of using data to *support instruction for authentic learning*.

Several research studies have investigated the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning compared

to traditional instruction (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993; Vernon & Blake, 1993; Kalaian, Mullan, & Kasim,

1999; Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003; Newman, 2003; Gijbels, Dochy, Van den

Bossche, & Segers, 2005). Strobel and van Barneveld (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of a number of

these studies and determined inquiry-based learning students outperform traditionally taught students

when assessments were focused on performance and were skill-oriented.

A number of the research studies supporting inquiry-based learning at the high school level are

subject or content specific. For example, Mergendoller, Maxwell, and Bellisimo (2007) determined that

inquiry-based learning was found to be a more effective instructional approach for teaching

macroeconomics than traditional lecture–discussion ($p = .05$). Visser (2002) also compared the effects of

problem-based and lecture-based instruction in a high-school genetics class. Visser found statistically

significant differences ($p < .05$) in learning outcomes and motivation for students in the inquiry-based

learning and lecture–discussion treatments. In addition, a 2008 study found inquiry-based learning to be

more effective than traditional instruction in increasing academic achievement on annual state-

administered assessment tests in science. Specifically, the study demonstrated that standards-based,

inquiry science curriculum can lead to standardized achievement test gains in underserved urban students,

when the curriculum is highly specified, developed, and aligned with professional development and

administrative support (Geier, Blumenfeld, Marx, Krajcik, et al. 2008).). It should be noted that the

Consortium students are required to satisfactorily complete four performance assessments in each of the four core subject areas in order to graduate.

Progress Ratings of NYC High Schools

Legend:
- Consorium Schools
- All NYC High Schools
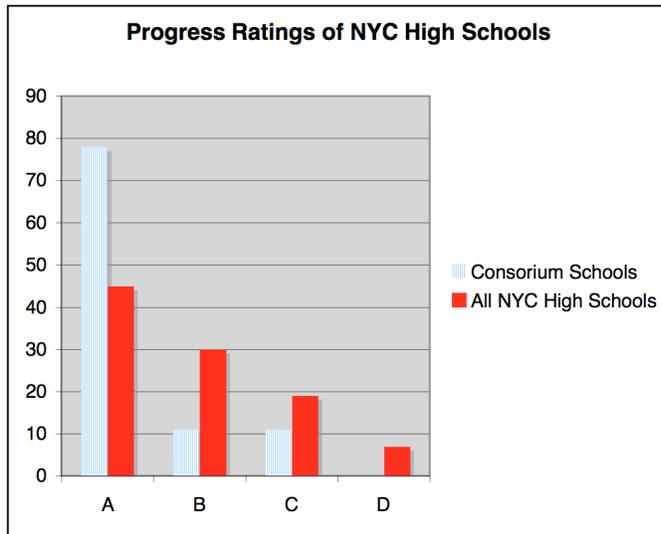
The Consortium has demonstrated success with their students, and consortium schools outperform NYC schools in general, while serving a relatively higher-need student population. Consortium schools post a lower dropout rate, higher college-bound rate, and higher daily attendance. The student demographics at consortium schools also indicate they have more students of color, more students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, more students with IEPs, and more incoming students scoring below the state standard on reading and mathematics than the average NYC high school (Foote, 2007).

Consortium school students are permitted to substitute performance assessments for the state-mandated Regents exams, largely due to the success of the schools. The Consortium students must still take and pass the Regents English Language Arts Exam in order to graduate. The Consortium's high graduation rate, compared to other schools is evidence that Consortium students outperform other students in at least one standardized measure. New York City, home to 24 of the Consortium schools, provides progress reports for all schools, rating them as A, B, C, or D. The chart at the left indicates the differences between consortium schools and all schools based on 2008-09 data (second indicator of success). School grades are based on school environments, student achievement and student progress scores.

In 2001, the Consortium began a longitudinal study to document the college performance of their high school graduates, tracking GPAs and persistence rates to evaluate the thesis that consortium school graduates are well prepared for the academic demands of college. Impressive, and promising, results

from this well-designed and implemented study are beginning to emerge, detailing the achievements of consortium school graduates in 2001 and 2002. In this sample, *all* students attended some form of post-secondary education; with 77% enrolled in four-year colleges. Upon completion of three semesters of college, the GPA for the sample was 2.6 out of 4.0. Consortium students are persisting in college as well. 84% of sample students enrolling in a four-year college within one year of graduation re-enrolled for a second year; 59% of those attending two-year institutions re-enrolled for a second year. This compares with national rates of 73% and 56% respectively (Foote, 2007).

These results support the effectiveness of the Consortium model – they retain students, graduate them, and send them onto postsecondary opportunities prepared to persist and succeed. Importantly, they accomplish this with a student population that is at high risk for failure. The NETWORK will build on the demonstrated success of this model by thoughtfully and intentionally applying the tenets to several new populations: new state accountability contexts and rural/ suburban schools in addition to urban settings. The Consortium schools are also *schools of choice* and were established as new schools – the NETWORK will include more traditional high schools. The NETWORK model will be carefully documented through a process evaluation to track changes and determine which elements are the most sensitive and necessary in each context.

The NETWORK will impact 11,000 students directly; and possibly many more as the experience and expected success is documented and disseminated. We expect the student impact to be even larger than what has been demonstrated by the Consortium because of the significantly lower postsecondary enrollment numbers seen in rural and suburban schools across New England.

Experience of Eligible Applicant

The Plymouth Public School District (PPSD) (the applicant) is home to two large comprehensive high schools, with a third school currently under construction.

The PPS are in their second year of successfully implementing a $2.5 million Smaller Learning Communities grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The goals of this SLC grant describe the

overall vision of high school transformation, and have laid the groundwork for successful participation in this larger project:

❖ To increase student achievement for all while closing existing achievement gaps.

❖ To prepare all students for success in post-secondary education and employment.

❖ To provide all students with a rigorous, relevant program of studies.

❖ To create a school climate that provides a personalized learning environment for every student, built on a foundation of student, staff, family, business and community partnerships.

Information drawn from the 2009-2010 interim evaluation report of this SLC grant documents early success, with achievements attributable to structural changes implemented during the first year of this grant. Though not yet completed, a number of objectives have been met and, in some cases, exceeded:

❖ The percentage of students achieving proficiency (or better), as measured by the MCAS CPI, rose more than the 3% *year one* target (PNHS).

❖ CPI gaps[2] decreased between Spring 2008 and 2009 testing by 23% in ELA, and by 45% in Math for SWD; and by 46% in ELA, and by 43% in Math for low income students. (PNHS)

❖ The percentage of students entering postsecondary education rose 4% between 2007 and 2008, exceeding the 3% SLC goal for year 1 of the grant. (PNHS)

❖ The percentage of students entering postsecondary education fell 1.5% between 2007 and 2008 for the academic portion of PSHS; and rose 8.5% at the technical part, exceeding the 3% SLC goal for year 1 of the grant. (PSHS)

Plymouth South HS was featured in a Rennie Center (2009) briefing as one of 11 Massachusetts high schools cited for success in reducing the dropout rate. Though a combination of factors have been credited with this success, Plymouth South was particularly noted for advisors who work with at-risk

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[2] CPI Gaps are represented as the difference in the CPI between the subgroup and aggregate CPI scores. Changes from year to year are represented as percentages, calculated based on the CPI score difference from one year to the next, divided by the base (earlier) year.

students to assist them in developing their own coursework to ensure that it is aligned to their interests and academic goals.

The Plymouth Public Schools have demonstrated success in a number of other areas, notably in establishing public-private partnerships for the benefit of the community. PPS is in the process of establishing a Sustainable Energy Learning Center, an academy-like center housed in an oceanside, offsite building with classroom and meeting space. When fully realized, this center will be a space where students can imagine, design, and conduct project-based learning experiences related to the broad topic of sustainable energy. Community partners involved in bringing this vision to reality include Plymouth Rock Studies, Aeronautica, Makepeace, and the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant. This site will be fully utilized as part of the NETWORK, made available to all network schools.

Other network schools have also demonstrated significant success in increasing student achievement through a variety of mechanisms. Newfound, Laconia, Manchester West, and Nute High Schools have collectively implemented over 400 student projects as part of ELO project; Noble High, identified as a leading edge school in Breaking Ranks II has created numerous interdisciplinary projects that require a performance assessment; and Mt. Abe is creating an alternative high school that is entirely performance based.

The Plymouth Public Schools, as well as a number of the network schools, have also established a track record of successfully working with outside partners and within a network structure. Plymouth is currently working with both CSSR (technical assistance coaching) and UCLA SMP (outside evaluation) through their Smaller Learning Communities grant. Each of the ELO schools have identified numerous local partners that have provided mentors for each of the ELO's completed. Both the ELO project and the Mt. Abe project have been primarily funded through the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the largest philanthropic education funder in New England.

Quality of the Project Evaluation

The UCLA School Management Program, Northeast Region (SMP) proposes to evaluate the implementation of the New England Network for Personalization and Performance. This five year longitudinal evaluation will involve the collection and analysis of accurate, valid and reliable data for GPRA performance indicators and project performance measures identified for this program and regular feedback to and assistance with refining the program to meet its proposed implementation goals and objectives. SMP will prepare and submit yearly evaluation reports with findings relative to measures of progress on goals, indicators of and feedback on program implementation progress, and evidenced needs for improvement. A final, comprehensive evaluation will be completed at the end of year five summarizing overall findings with regard to the success of the program's implementation and its' impact on student achievement.

The UCLA School Management Program is a nonprofit school reform initiative of the **Graduate School of Education & Information Studies** at the University of California, Los Angeles. SMP is located on the UCLA campus in Los Angeles, California, with a satellite office serving the Northeast Region in Trumbull, Connecticut. The proposed evaluation will be conducted through SMP's Northeast Region office, and all evaluators assigned to this project live and work in New England.

The NETWORK evaluation plan is designed to fully describe a workable program of high school transformation that will result in lower dropout rates, higher graduation rates and greater student enrollment, persistence and success in postsecondary endeavors. Program theory will be used to drive the design and data collection for this project. This will allow us to *test our theory*, as well as providing an opportunity to *focus on improving the design* with an eye towards replication and scaling up.

Our program theory assumes foundational support for the transformation of schools is directly linked to strengthening student access to academic content, leading to improved student outcomes. The design and data collection will *test* this theory by exploring and identifying the factors that may influence both outputs and outcomes. By systematically and intentionally collecting data on the process elements of this design, we will be in a position to identify and fix gaps in the implementation plan.

The NETWORK will be developed in partnership with schools on a real time basis – with implementation of the initial design (based on the Consortium model) at the outset. Process and reflective data (observational, survey, and interview) will be gathered on an ongoing basis to describe each step of the process (what happened) as well as its effectiveness (what went well? What could have gone better?). SMP staff will gather and organize this data, and use it as the basis for refinements and planning in collaboration with the Project Steering Committee.

Our design will allow us to have a fully developed and described intervention – a model that has been described and piloted. We will also have five years of output and outcome data that are likely to indicate the promise of the intervention for achieving the desired ends.

Sample Process Measures, with evaluation questions and data collection methods

Objective 1. Development of inquiry based curricular units and performance based assessments.

Did we attract the participating teams we targeted across all schools? Do teams and team members persist across the years?	Document review – registration and attendance documents.
Do team members find the workshops and support match their needs and learning styles?	Survey of participants at least twice per year
Are workshops and support accomplishing the goals and objectives they were designed to meet?	Expert review – feedback and discussion gathered from Steering Committee members and PAR review board members.
Are curriculum units and performance assessments created and used? Are they modified based on feedback and structured moderation studies?	Observation of materials in use.

Objective 4. Establishment of a Performance Assessment Review Board with nationally recognized experts.

Is the PAR board well attended and effectively providing feedback after each site visit?	Interviews with PAR Board members to determine perception of effectiveness and engagement, review of agenda and minutes from meetings.
Is there evidence that schools are receiving and using feedback from the PAR board?	Interviews with administrators and teachers to determine perception of effectiveness and engagement, review of feedback documents with evidence of adjusted practice.

Sample Outcome Measures

Outcome 1. 15 inquiry-based curricular units,	Units and exemplars of student work will be

with associated performance assessments, will be created each year.	collected and disseminated via electronic means.
Outcome 3. HS graduation rates will increase by 4% annually.	Information documented through high school data collection reports.
Outcome 4. Postsecondary enrollment will increase by 4% annually.	Information documented through NSDC reports.

This set of information will allow us to identify the conditions that may hinder or leverage implementation of the project across the different contexts of the project sites. All information will be collected in a way that could allow for disaggregation by site – potentially providing useful information on the specific contexts (geography, demographics, content area, and others) that *might* be tied to differing levels of outcome attainment. A full set of process and outcome measures, evaluation questions and data collection methods is included in the Appendix.

All the above information will be compiled and reported to the Project Steering Committee, with draft reports due on January 15 and June 1 of each year, and the final report due on July 15. A detailed evaluation plan will be developed and shared with the steering committee no later than October 1 of each project year. Data will be collected and analyzed in a way that supports the reporting of GPRA short-term performance measures (implementation fidelity, promising student outcomes, assessment of progress and actual costs per student) and long-term performance measures (evidence of promising student outcomes, replicability, and cost per student).

Laureen Cervone will serve as the Project Director for any work resulting from this agreement. Under Cervone's direction, a four-person evaluation team, based in New England, will conduct all work under this proposal, in partnership with project staff. No subcontractors will be engaged. Cervone's resume is included in the Appendix.

Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale

By the end of this grant-funded project period (five years) we expect the 11,000 students attending network schools will *all* have the opportunity to participate in at least two inquiry-based

learning experiences. In addition, nearly 400 teachers will have received focused, supportive professional development as they build skill in developing, coaching, facilitating and assessing personalized learning experiences. The number of students impacted by the Network can easily be scaled up to reach non-network schools throughout all four participating states (and beyond).

Each year of the project, 15 inquiry-based units and assessments will be created, estimated to directly impact 1,500 students at an initial cost of $800 per student. As units and assessments accumulate and are shared, the cost per student drops to roughly $100 by the end of year 5. Materials and experience developed for replication through this project would help contain the start up costs during the scaling up phase, but professional development and outside support will be critical to success as new networks are established. Costs at the 100,000 to 500,000 student level will remain close to $100 per student.

The structure of the NETWORK was specifically designed to enable replication into new contexts. Part of the evaluation component of this grant is structured as a 'process' evaluation. The evaluator will document implementation to provide evidence of the structures that work to create a successful Network system focused on personalization, enabling replication elsewhere in the country.

The Project Steering Committee plays a vital role in preparing to scale up the project. An external communications sub committee will be established as part of the steering committee to ensure that work of the Network is widely disseminated.

Providing high, quality professional development to rural schools is an important aspect of this grant. Because of this focus, innovative ways to use technology – such as distance learning and networking systems – will guide the development of effective communication and feedback models that can help disseminate the findings to schools throughout the country (whether rural, suburban, or urban). The Consortium maintains an open access website that allows site visitors to share ideas, curriculum, instruction and assessments, with a password protected 'work' area for participating teachers. The NETWORK will build on this work, creating a linked site unique to the new network.

Because all four of the states involved in this project have begun working toward high school reform and demonstrations of proficiency the state departments of education in these states are anxious to learn

from and share the successful strategies employed in this grant. Three of the four states (NH, ME and VT) are already participating in the New England Secondary School Consortium (supported by Nellie Mae) and are committed to implementing to personalized approaches to learning.

The Network will employ the USDOE Innovation portal, participate in Communities of Practice, and disseminate successful practices within and outside the project.   This grant will also develop and refine a number of curricular units and assessments that can be shared across Network schools, as well as non-Network schools.

Sustainability

The collaborative approach of the NETWORK was designed to support sustainability.   The Consortium will serve as a model for development and sustainability, having established a solid foundation in this area during their nearly fifteen years of growth and success. The continuous improvement process and feedback, so vital for sustainability, is strengthened through our partnership with an objective outside evaluator, who will frequently and consistently provide us with qualitative and quantitative data to measure progress towards the desired outcomes of the NETWORK.

On-site coaching and support for school teams is *specifically designed* to provide continuous improvement by focusing on what is working in schools, and to uncover ways to strengthen the program. The model of coaching employed by CSSR is integral to creating and sustaining change in the schools. CSSR will assign a school change coach in each participating school. This coach will work with the change leadership team to help the school understand the change process, dealing with expectations for resistance and communication and buy in requirements. CSSR will work with this team to support the cultural shift needed at each school. This change becomes self-sustaining as the leadership capacity is developed. The expertise of educators at network schools becomes self-sustaining as the number of faculty and students impacted continues to grow.

The Steering Committee and PAR Board structure further enhance sustainability efforts. The Steering Committee will allow various stakeholders to participate in the development of the project and

the overall dissemination of findings. As part of the Steering Committee design, an internal and external communications sub committee will be established, recognizing the differing needs to address both groups of stakeholders. A project that is developed to meet the needs of stakeholders will be sustainable.

The Performance Assessment Review (PAR) Board plays an integral role in the development of valid and appropriate assessments, while providing useful feedback for improvement. This Board, made up of nationally recognized individuals, will make visits to Network schools, observe and participate in student presentations, interview students and faculty, and review faculty documentation.

The PAR Board will provide support for creating a continuously improving process at each school and the PSC will provide management for this project. Essentially, the PAR Board will focus on school practices and the PSC will focus on school and district leadership infrastructure and support. Taken together, these two entities will work together to ensure sustainability of the network.

The work of the network schools will parallel policy developments within the host states, and 'catch up' or be incorporated into growing statewide networks focused on personalizing the high school experience. The state of New Hampshire already has a number of ongoing efforts that will be aligned with the NETWORK, such as The Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) project. ELO Coordinators are established in a number of network schools and are responsible for approving student designed learning experiences for credit, contributing to the creation of a defined set of criteria for demonstration of mastery.

Quality of Management Plan and Personnel

The NETWORK design was carefully thought through to conduct this work in a way that will achieve positive and lasting results. The following pages summarize the specific action steps needed to accomplish the work on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. A more detailed work plan is included in the Appendix.

Objective 1. Development of inquiry based curricular units and performance based assessments.

Milestone 1.1 Each school team will develop and pilot one unit/ assessment per year.

Milestone 1.2 Each student team will develop and conduct one project that culminates in an exhibition for credit per year.

Action steps:

❖ Summer institute designed and co-facilitated by PSC, CSSR and the Consortium for teams of teachers and students from each network school. The inclusion of students in the process ensures our goal of employing a student-centered and highly personalized approach to learning is being met. Teams will develop inquiry-based curricular units and begin the conversation about assessment during year 1. Teams will be solicited and selected by the PSC. In subsequent years, as existing teams return, moderation study will begin in order to boost the reliability and validity of common scoring rubrics. New teams attend each year along with existing teams.

❖ Teams of teachers continue to meet during the school year with Consortium mentors as they implement and adjust newly developed units and assessments.

Objective 2. Establishment of a broadly representative Project Steering Committee responsible for project oversight, communication, dissemination, and evaluation.

Milestone 2.1 The NETWORK project is well managed, on time, within budget, and making progress towards project goals.

Action steps:

❖ A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be formed, comprised of various stakeholders, including, representatives from CSSR, Consortium, SMP, Nellie Mae Foundation, NEASC, State DOE personnel, local school personnel, community members, families, Congressional and union representatives.   A tentative list of PSC members is included in the Appendix.

❖ Project steering committee members are identified and invited by the Project Director. The PSC meets each summer (beginning in year 1) at the Plymouth Center for Environmental Research prior to the summer institute to finalize plans for the year. Quarterly meetings are scheduled and facilitated through the use of technology. The PSC will be formed within two weeks of grant award notification in order to finalize the selection of school-based teams.

Objective 3. Establishment of a school-based change leadership team with the support of a school change coach and procedures from CSSR.

Milestone 3.1 Change leadership teams meet regularly and function well with clear roles.

Milestone 3.2 Staff and students indicate a positive change in school culture.

Action steps:

❖ A school-based change leadership team is established at each school, facilitated by a coach from CSSR. Team members will be nominated by role and selected by the PSC. This team meets regularly and employs protocols for effective meetings. Teams will meet monthly, with the first meeting scheduled within six weeks of grant award notification.

Objective 4. Establishment of a Performance Assessment Review Board with nationally recognized experts.

Milestone 4.1 PAR team is formed and composed of recognized experts in the field.

Milestone 4.2 PAR teams visit schools and provide useful feedback to project sites.

Action steps:

❖ A Performance Assessment Review (PAR) Board will be formed to provide outside, expert validation of the activities at network schools. PAR members will come from similar areas including a number of higher education and business representatives, will participate in one school site visit per year, and attend quarterly meetings (either in person or via phone or Web).   A tentative list of PAR board members is included in the Appendix.

❖ PAR board members will be identified and invited to participate by the Project Director and PSC during the first six weeks of the project.

❖ A schedule of school site visits will be developed and coordinated among PAR board members, with each member completing at least one visit each year.

❖ PAR Board members will communicate with one another through electronic bulletin boards and other technology-enabled means.

A project management organizational chart follows.

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┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐
│     Evaluator       │     │  NETWORK Project    │     │      Steering       │
│   (UCLA SMP         │     │     Director        │     │     Committee       │
│    Evaluation       │     │ & Project Coordinator│    │                     │
│                     │     │ (Plymouth Public School    │                     │
└─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐                                 ┌─────────────────────┐
│    Performance      │                                 │        Sub-         │
│    Assessment       │                                 │     Committees      │
│   Review (PAR)      │                                 │                     │
│      Board          │                                 └─────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘
                                                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                                                        │     TA Provider     │
                                                        │   (Consortium)      │
                                                        └─────────────────────┘

                                                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                                                        │     TA Provider     │
                                                        │      (CSSR)         │
                                                        └─────────────────────┘

                                                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                                                        │   Cross School      │
                                                        │ Change Leadership   │
                                                        │    Committee        │
                                                        └─────────────────────┘

              ┌─────────────────────┐
              │   School Change     │
              │    Leadership       │
              │      Teams          │
              └─────────────────────┘

              ┌─────────────────────┐
              │      School         │
              │     Teacher         │
              │    Led Teams        │
              └─────────────────────┘
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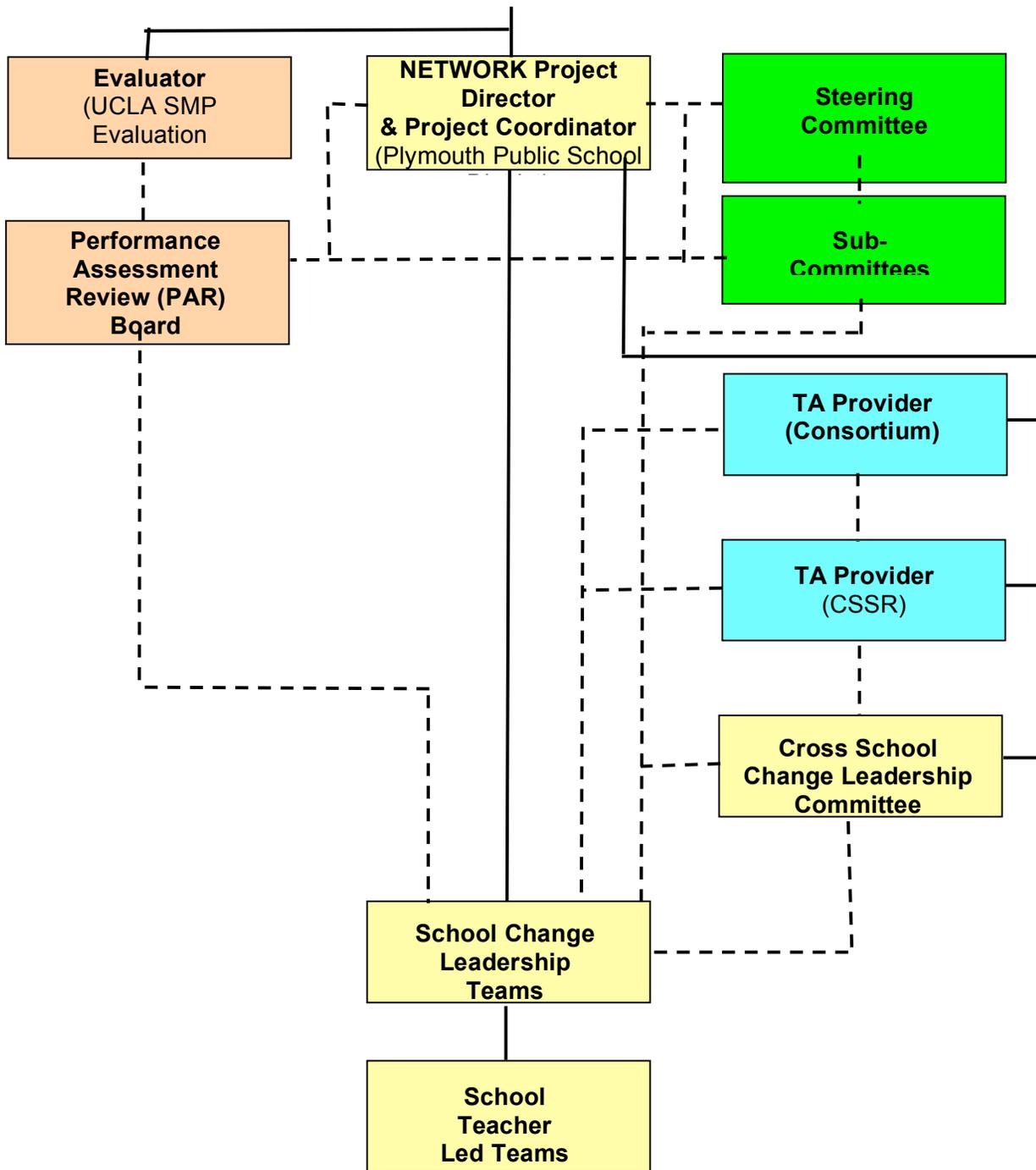
Dr. Gary Maestas, Superintendent of Schools in Plymouth, MA will serve as the Project Director

and be responsible for the overall conduct of the grant. Christopher Campbell will serve as the i3 Project

Coordinator. The Project Coordinator will oversee the day to day functions and administrative

requirements. In addition two site coordinators will be responsible for coordinating on-site professional

development offerings.

Other key partners involved in this grant include Ann Cook, Co-Chair of the Consortium; Melissa

Roderick, Co-Director of the Consortium on Chicago School Research; and Joseph DiMartino, President,

Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR).

Ann Cook is the Co-Chair of the New York Performance Standards Consortium (Consortium).

Cook also serves as the Co-Director of the Urban Academy Laboratory High School (a member of the

Consortium) in New York City. The Urban Academy is a US Department of Education's *Blue Ribbon*

School of Excellence and was selected as a *New American High School* "National Showcase Site." Cook

will oversee all technical assistance provided by the Consortium.

Joe DiMartino is founder and president of the Center for Secondary School Redesign, Inc.

(CSSR). Under his leadership CSSR has become a leading provider of ground breaking technical

assistance to support both policy change and change leadership at the district and school level leading to a

richer secondary school experience for all youth. He co-authored, with John Clarke, the highly acclaimed

book, *Personalizing the High School Experience for Each Student,* that was published by the Association

for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in April 2008.

Melissa Roderick will serve as the Chairperson of the Performance Assessment Review (PAR)

Board. Roderick is the Hermon Dunlap Smith Professor at the School of Social Service Administration at

the University of Chicago and a co-director at Consortium on Chicago School Research. Professor

Roderick is an expert in urban school reform, high school reform, high-stakes testing, minority adolescent

development, and school transitions. Her work has focused attention on the transition to high school as a

critical point in students' school careers and her new work examines the transition to college among

Chicago Public School (CPS) students.

Resumes for all key staff are included in the appendix.