

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

a briefing series for new england's educational leaders

Your leadership is critical.

This briefing series is **our way of saying thanks**.

A high-quality education has never been more important than it is right now. The [New England Secondary School Consortium](#) works to strengthen our high schools, close persistent achievement gaps, and improve teaching for all students. We hope that our Leadership in Action series will spark conversations across the region about what our students can—and should—be learning in today's high schools.

How Do Today's Students Learn?

Science has given us new discoveries about the brain and learning, while our best schools and teachers are showing us how to energize, engage, inspire, and prepare. We know so much more today about what works in education. We need to use these remarkable insights to strengthen our high schools, make teaching more effective, and prepare every student for success in life.

What We've Learned

Here are a few things we've learned about learning:

- ✓ **The human brain physically changes when we learn.** The more we learn, the better we become at learning. Intelligence is not fixed and unchanging—problem solving, experience, and practice literally make us smarter. These scientific findings call into question many traditional ways of teaching, while also giving us a clear guide for the future.
- ✓ **Student beliefs influence how they learn.** When students believe that intelligence is genetic and unchangeable they often learn at slower rates and avoid challenges. But students who embrace new problems and overcome failures learn more and learn it faster. Teachers who promote a positive “everyone can learn” mindset encourage students to excel.
- ✓ **Everything matters when it comes to learning.** Being a successful school is not just about what teachers teach in class—the school culture, the relationships between adults and students, the food that is served, and the technologies used in classrooms have a profound impact on learning. To graduate all students prepared, our schools need to support them academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.
- ✓ **Learning should reflect real life.** As adults, students take what they learn in school and apply it in their lives and careers. When classroom teaching is blended with real-world experiences—internships, community service, public speaking, interviews with experts, or scientific investigations of the world around them—students not only learn “the basics,” but they learn how real businesses work, how to collaborate in teams, how to advocate for important causes, or how to turn classroom learning into actions that lead to better employment opportunities and a stronger society.

Want to Learn More?

Visit the [Leadership in Action website](#) and download *I Want to Know More*, a selection of information and resources for those interested in reading more about how today's students learn.

Still have questions? [Find your state contact](#).