

## What Does It Take? Understanding District Transformation in New England States

*A study from the [Center on Reinventing Public Education](#) (CRPE), supported by the Barr Foundation*

In June 2025, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) is launching a two-year study investigating what enables and constrains transformative change that unleashes opportunity for every student in New England school districts. We invite education leaders to join us in this critical work.

### The Big Question

What system change efforts are districts leading to improve experiences and outcomes for every student — and what's standing in their way?

This study will explore two key ideas in district leadership: **will** (the motivation and appetite for change) and **skill** (the capacity and strategies to lead it). A clearer view of leadership will and skill — and where it's underleveraged and undermined — can help unlock more effective, responsive school systems that serve every student.

### Why This Matters

Many New England districts are investing boldly to reimagine high school to prepare every student for long-term success. But progress often stalls without deeper shifts in how districts operate. Leaders face real constraints—from political polarization to funding threats and educator shortages. Still, transformation is both possible and urgent. This study will illuminate how districts are driving change, the barriers they encounter, and the strategies they use to overcome them.

### What We're Doing

CRPE will be leading a three-part research study on districts in the six New England states:

- **District Leader Survey**  
A brief survey (10 minutes) to gather a regional picture of how district leaders are thinking about change, what strategies they're pursuing, and what's holding them back.
- **Artifact-Based Interviews**  
In-depth conversations with district leaders focused on strategic plans and instructional visions, where we'll explore the gap between aspiration and implementation.
- **Case Studies**  
Close-up looks at districts leading transformational change. We'll interview administrators, visit schools, and talk to educators and students to learn how change efforts are impacting classroom practice.

If you're interested in participating, collaborating, or shaping this work as an advisor, we'd love to connect.

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