

**No. R-377. Joint resolution in support of the New England Secondary School Consortium**

(J.R.H.34)

Offered by: Representative Peltz of Woodbury, Clark of Vergennes, Donovan of Burlington, Geier of South Burlington, Mook of Bennington, Pearce of Richford, Perley of Enosburg, Waite-Simpson of Essex and Zenie of Colchester

Whereas, the New England Secondary School Consortium—a multistate partnership forged to promote and advance higher educational aspirations, performance, and attainment among the adolescents of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—has been and will continue to be a force for enhancing the quality of Vermont’s system of public secondary education, and

Whereas, Vermont must transform—from its state house to its schoolhouses—educational policies, assessment practices, teaching strategies, professional development, and state and local leadership to ensure that the educational achievement of its students will be competitive with that of their peers across New England and the globe and that every student will graduate prepared for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of the 21st century, and

Whereas, education and high levels of postsecondary-degree attainment are critical to workforce development, job creation, and sustainable, long-term economic prosperity in the 21st century, and

Whereas, it is critical that Vermont strive to improve educational quality, opportunity, and efficacy for its citizens through regional collaboration,

resource sharing, expertise exchange, and cross-state student performance and achievement comparability, and

Whereas, the consortium is developing: (1) internationally competitive educational models and instructional programs at the secondary level that will redefine the traditional concept of the public high school to more effectively mirror the lives and learning needs of today's students; (2) learning standards that reflect the ways in which our students will live, work, learn, and lead in the 21st century; (3) new state and local policies designed to stimulate educational innovation and creativity; and (4) performance assessments that can more accurately measure the essential academic knowledge and critical life skills that Vermont students will apply throughout their lives and across all educational, career, and civic contexts, and

Whereas, the New England states share similar histories, demographic populations, interdependent economic prospects, and educational and social challenges, and

Whereas, the independent and collective interests of our states can be more effectively served through strategic partnerships that can improve the educational, career, and life outcomes of our citizens, and

Whereas, the consortium is fostering a coordinated regional effort to build broad-based support for its major initiatives among educators, policy-makers, and business leaders while also engaging parents and community members in the educational process through local school involvement, positive messaging,

community outreach, and cross-state networking, and

Whereas, innovative regional collaborations have the potential to attract significant public and private investments, create a more highly skilled workforce, attract new economic opportunities, drive sustained economic growth, and improve the quality of life for all Vermont residents, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses its strong support and endorsement of the New England Secondary School Consortium and its mission, goals, and strategies, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor James Douglas, Commissioner of Education Armando Vilaseca, the commissioners of education for Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island; the executive director of the Great Schools Partnership; the president of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation; and the director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.