FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: June 15, 2011
Contact: Heidi Normandin
E-mail: hnormandin@ecs.org
Phone: 303.299.3629
ECS Web Site: http://www.ecs.org

New England Secondary School Consortium
Receives ECS Frank Newman Award
Five states recognized for their bold leadership and innovative partnership

Denver, CO – The Education Commission of the States (ECS) will honor the New England Secondary School Consortium with the prestigious Frank Newman Award for State Innovation at the 2011 National Forum on Education Policy in Denver on July 7. The award recognizes the Consortium's bold example of collaboration, expertise exchange and resource sharing.

Formed in 2007, the New England Secondary School Consortium is a regional partnership encompassing Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The five states are committed to pursuing common goals and sharing successes and setbacks regardless of leadership turnover or budget constraints. By 2016, the five states intend to increase four-year, on-time graduation rates to 90% or higher and raise college enrollment rates to at least 80%, among other objectives.

“The Consortium has been extraordinarily important for Vermont and our partners by supporting our work to improve and change what a high school education will look like in the future,” said Armando Vilaseca, Vermont Commissioner of Education. “The idea that our work is being mirrored by our fellow New England states provides the focus and energy we need to make high school restructuring a priority — and a reality. Having five states collaborating on student outcomes, college-ready criteria and policy across all five states guarantees support from the higher education, business and government sectors.”

In the first three years, the Consortium has built a strong and sustainable operational model that includes a broad-based leadership council, an ambitious regional policy agenda and common metrics for tracking student performance across states.

“New Hampshire is pleased to be part of the New England Secondary School Consortium and deeply honored to be selected for this award,” said Virginia M. Barry, New Hampshire Commissioner of Education. “The Consortium goals are consistent with our own high school redesign efforts and the Department’s commitment to ensure every student will graduate with the knowledge and the skills needed to be successful in the colleges and careers of the 21st century. As a regional partnership, we can promote the kind of systemic reforms that might otherwise be more difficult to achieve if our states acted independently.”
"The Consortium’s forward thinking efforts to ensure their students can make seamless transitions into the workforce or higher education, while maximizing limited resources, are commendable," stated ECS President Roger Sampson.

Since 1988 the ECS Frank Newman Award for State Innovation has recognized states and U.S. territories for innovative education reforms or programs that go beyond incremental changes to improve student outcomes on a large scale. Criteria for this award include programs or initiatives that are bold, replicable and hold valuable lessons for other states, and have bipartisan, broad-based support to ensure sustainability. In 2005, ECS named the award in honor of the late Frank Newman, ECS president for 14 years.

The New England Secondary School Consortium is coordinated by the Great Schools Partnership and financially supported by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the Rhode Island Foundation and the five participating state departments of education.

###

ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate compact devoted to education. Since 1965, ECS has helped governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. A nonprofit organization, ECS is located in Denver, Colorado.