

What are the benefits of proficiency-based education? ... for students? ... for districts? ... for parents?

Evidence from school districts around the country indicates that the adoption of proficiency-based practices leads to increased student achievement over the traditional system. Students report that they understand academic expectations more clearly and can identify their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to those expectations. Students are better able to connect what they are doing in a classroom activity or assignment to the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Qualitative data from Maine suggests the same outcome (see the Maine DOE Center for Best Practice).

What educators are seeing in Maine is increased student engagement, increased personalization of instruction, and increased targeting of interventions to the specific needs of students. Educators also report that implementation of a proficiency-based system leads to greater collaboration and articulation of curriculum within and across schools, more reflective practice, and a greater capacity to respond to the individual needs of students. The reporting system provides parents with more specific information about their child's growth and achievement. Parents are better able to understand school and grade level expectations and more thoroughly support their child in achieving these expectations.

How will colleges react to this new system?

For more than 10 years adopters of proficiency-based systems have approached colleges and universities asking whether or not a proficiency-based system would disadvantage students. Overwhelmingly, these institutions of higher education have said "not a problem."

In 2013, the New England Secondary Schools Consortium began approaching colleges, asking them to endorse proficiency-based learning and graduation and to pledge that no student would be disadvantaged because their school has a proficiency-based system. Many have done so (see www.newenglandssc.org/endorsement). Colleges and universities accept students from a wide range of educational settings every year, including international students and those who have been home-schooled. In considering students, admissions offices look at a variety of transcript styles to determine admissions.

Are there COSTS to school districts as we shift to proficiency-based systems?

While there are no additional or new costs in developing a proficiency-based learning system, the shift often requires a redeployment/reevaluation of how funds are expended. Districts shifting to a proficiency-based system dedicate time and money (e.g., Title 2A) to professional development to support changes in instruction and assessment practices. Likewise, many districts evaluate their RTI system so that the interventions are targeted and timely and tied to graduation standards and performance indicators.

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The challenge...is to build a system that prepares every student for some type of post-secondary education and the high-skill careers of today and the future....We have to address the basic architecture of the industrial-era model of schooling built more than a century ago. – Education Evolving

Getting to PROFICIENCY

Helping Maine Graduate Every Student Prepared
for Administrators

Getting to Proficiency provides technical assistance, resources, and guidance for school districts to implement the Proficiency-based Diploma, and to do so in a way that promotes student learning and achievement of the Maine Learning Results. A *Getting to Proficiency* you will find a self-assessment tool that will help you understand your district's specific needs.

The Maine DOE **Center for Best Practice** contains resources for districts trying to implement school improvement measures such as proficiency-based or learner-centered systems. At the CBP you will find extensive case studies of school districts that have begun implementation of such systems. You will also find videos of students and teachers showing what proficiency-based education looks like in the classroom.



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