



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0023

PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

THOMAS A. DESJARDIN
ACTING COMMISSIONER

March 9, 2015

Steve Nolan
Superintendent of Schools
RSU 40
1070 Heald Highway
Union, ME 04862

Dear Superintendent Nolan:

This letter acknowledges receipt of RSU 40's application to confirm readiness to meet the proficiency-based graduation requirements. The Department commends you for your efforts to advance proficiency based education. You have already implemented important changes to support this paradigm shift to proficiency-based diplomas. Included among these changes are:

- Evidence of the reporting mechanism for reporting student progress on course requirements and proficiency of graduation standards
- Evidence of criteria for the Self-directed and Lifelong Learner Guiding Principle
- Evidence that students have access to multiple pathways
- Evidence of revising and adopting a *Student Achievement /Evaluation of Student Achievement* policy

We understand that you will continue the proficiency-based implementation at the high school and we support and encourage you to proceed further with this important work.

Maine DOE is charged with assessing whether or not the district has met all the proficiency-based graduation requirements needed to approve RSU 40's Confirmation of Readiness. We have identified the follow evidence that would be necessary for our granting of your current application.

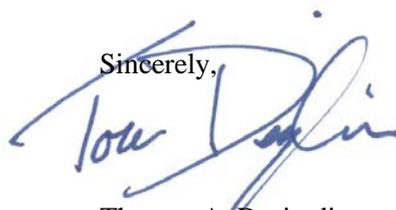
- Evidence that the interventions in your system of support do close achievement gaps and build towards proficiency
- Evidence that the collection of performance indicators aligned to the courses in any pathway traditional or atypical, create the opportunity to learn and demonstrate at the complexity and rigor intended in the graduation standards. (e.g., developing conceptual understandings that transfer to new learning)
- Evidence of a sample assessment in each content area measuring graduation standard(s) the criteria for the threshold proficiency score of 80 aligned with the complexity and cognitive

demand of the high school graduation standards in each content area. (Another way to say this is how are the graduation standards met and assessed within courses? What would a sufficient demonstration of proficiency in a graduation standard look like?)

- Evidence of the proficiency criteria and opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills embedded in the Guiding Principles – A Clear and Effective Communicator; A Creative and Practical Problem Solver; A Responsible and Involved Citizen; and An Integrative and Informed Thinker (most of the examples given seem better suited to measure self-directed and lifelong learner)
- Evidence of recently adopted policies (IKF, IKE, IHCD, IJ)
- Evidence of proficiency in measurable knowledge and skills and conceptual understandings learned as a result of successfully passing a dual enrollment course or Advanced Placement course that would substantiate automatically meeting the appropriate content area graduation standard(s) without having to take the graduation assessment.

There are just a few months remaining before the June 30th deadline for renewing application requests. During this period of time before the release of the applications, taking the time to reflect on and gather evidence for the above bullets may be helpful in informing RSU 40's decision regarding which application option is the best fit for your journey to awarding a proficiency-based diploma.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Desjardin
Acting Commissioner of Education