

## What are the benefits of proficiency-based education for students?

Evidence from school districts around the country indicates that the adoption of proficiency-based practices leads to improved student achievement compared to the traditional system. Students report that they understand more clearly what's expected of them, can identify their own strengths and weaknesses and draw on these understandings to meet goals. Growth in these areas creates confidence in students as they collaborate with their teachers – choosing their path, advocating for it, and following it to success.

## 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.”

## What about student recognition and honors?

Recognizing student achievement is an important part of school culture. It is certainly possible to maintain all of the traditional forms of recognition traditional to high schools – top ten, GPA, etc. – in a proficiency-based system. Some districts are moving towards the Latin honors system – *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude* – which are common and familiar to universities and colleges throughout the United States. In such systems, rather than choose the ten (or five, or two) top performing students, all students who perform to high levels as *described by the standards* are honored.

## Will students be able to excel in this system?

Absolutely. The point of proficiency-based learning is to meet the student where they are, and help them go further. The traditional ways of going further – AP classes, international baccalaureate, honors challenges, etc. – can still be done in a proficiency based system. In addition, the flexibility exists within a proficiency-based system for the student to devise their own path forward, to set high goals, and to work with teachers (and other students, and community members) to reach those goals. The requirement is to demonstrate proficiency in the standards. The student has a big say in how to do that.

## What does this look like for students?

The Center for Best Practice created a series of videos to show the positive impact of proficiency-based/learner-centered education in the classroom. Check out these:

Seniors Presenting Capstones at Hall-Dale High School:  
<http://maine.gov/dae/cbp/videos/hall-dale-high.html>

Students Choose How to Organize Their Time with a Learning GPS:  
<http://maine.gov/dae/cbp/videos/hall-dale-middle.html>

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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 Students**

In a proficiency-based system, **students** are responsible and involved in their own learning. Their questions are welcome. They collaborate with teachers to set and meet goals. They insist that the school provide support so that they can get to proficiency in every standard. They come to school expecting to succeed.

The Maine DOE **Center for Best Practice** contains resources for districts trying to implement school improvements 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 the positive impact of proficiency-based education in the classroom



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