

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

### ... for students? ... for parents?

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 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.)

Educators in Maine are seeing increased student engagement and increased personalization of instruction. Educators also report that implementation of a proficiency-based system leads to more collaboration between teachers, more reflective practice, and a greater ability 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 what's expected of their child at each level school and, thus, are in a better position to 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](http://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.

## How does proficiency-based learning impact teachers?

The shift to a proficiency-based system will provide teachers with the information and structures they need to address the individual needs of their students. The following videos provide insight into the positive impact proficiency-based learning is having on these teachers and their students:

Shelly Moody and Valerie Glueck at Williams Elementary School, Oakland:  
<http://maine.gov/doe/cbp/videos/williams.html>

Kirby Reardon and Elizabeth Firnkess at James H. Bean School, Sidney:  
<http://maine.gov/doe/cbp/videos/bean.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 Teachers**

The work of **Teachers** changes considerably in a proficiency-based system, as they are enabled to act as effective facilitators of learning for every student.



The Maine DOE **Center for Best Practice** (CBP) 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 their classrooms.

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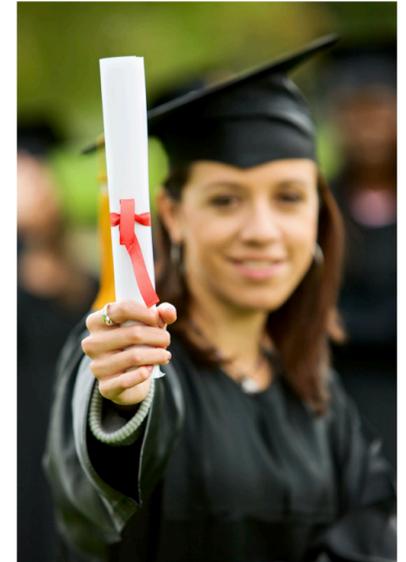
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