

Guiding Questions for Policy Development

Engage school board in developing conceptual understanding about proficiency-based learning

Description & Rationale:

Because of the complexity of this task and its reach, it is vital to establish a district-wide committee with key representatives and stakeholders who can take primary responsibility for designing and leading the implementation of a proficiency-based graduation system across the district so that there is coherence, K-12.

Guiding Questions:

1. Have we shared resources to our school board members such as readings, resources (including videos) from the Maine Department of Education Center for Best Practice and visits to other districts?
2. Have we engaged in discussion about the vision for our district and how proficiency-based learning supports attaining it?
3. What are potential barriers for the school board to support proficiency-based education?
4. What role will the school board play in supporting and communicating about proficiency-based education?
5. How can administrators and teachers help the school board understand proficiency-based learning?
6. How will the board have the opportunity to construct an understanding of proficiency-based learning? (Retreats, readings, etc)

Review existing policies

Description & Rationale:

In most cases, current policy will not align with proficiency-based learning. However, what is and what is not appropriate will require a thoughtful analysis of existing policies. In addition, as districts move forward with this step, they will need to determine key leverage points for policies knowing that a school board cannot create policies for all occasions. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that no set of policies can predict all future considerations and the review of policies must be ongoing, and must acknowledge changes in school culture and in the evolving understanding of proficiency-based learning.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does our board's process for policy adoption engage and include community members and educators to ensure that our community has conceptual understanding?
2. How might we increase engagement and inclusion of stakeholders?

Draft new and revised policies

Description & Rationale:

New policies will be needed—but such policies need to be targeted to specific issues. In general, fewer but more specific policies are more helpful than a host of broader policies.

Guiding Questions

1. How can we learn from other districts and adapt policies to our local needs?

Refine policies based on feedback

Description & Rationale:

As implementation unfolds, districts will have to monitor policies to be sure they accurately reflect the needs of students. To undertake this step, school boards may want to review policies from other districts. In addition, the refinement process should actively engage the broader community to ensure that policy passage also leads to broader policy acceptance.

Guiding Questions:

1. What process will be used to incorporate the feedback of stakeholders who have had an opportunity to review the proposed new policies?

Adopt new and revised policies

Description & Rationale:

Policies will need to be adopted by the appropriate school board in accordance with local governance requirements.

Guiding Questions:

1. How will newly passed policies be reviewed as the proficiency-based learning system is implemented?
2. What process will be in place to determine other policy areas that might also need to be reviewed?