

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Julie Edminster, and I am a resident of York, Maine.

I urge you to pass LD #1666 - An Act To Ensure the Successful Implementation of Proficiency-based Diplomas by Extending the Timeline for Phasing in Their Implementation

I am a software implementation consultant for higher education. I configure and train on software specifically designed for college admissions offices. Admissions offices use this industry standard software so they can track Freshman applicants from inquiries through admittance. In addition, I help build the Admissions reports and dashboards for college admissions' Executive Teams.

Every application record, workflow, report and dashboard that I build for these admissions teams includes a converted GPA based on a 1-100% scale for every (US) applicant. Tracking GPA and SAT scores for domestic students help Admissions teams to identify and differentiate qualified students and report on the quality of their applicant pool year over year. These competitive universities that I work with receive thousands of applications from US students for a limited number of freshman slots.

Recently, I had a candid conversation with one of my clients. She is the *Chief Enrollment Officer* at a well known university in Boston. During a break, I asked her about her thoughts around proficiency-based diplomas and transcripts. After a brief pause, she rolled her eyes and said we "put those applications in a separate pile since we can't differentiate the students." She went on to say that "those transcripts come from obscure and rural states like Maine."

We were on a break and she felt comfortable and spoke candidly with me. This conversation with the head of admissions was open, honest and not the typical marketing speak that a college may give to a high school principal or a parent. Their end goal is to increase the number of applications so their "acceptance rates" go down and they become a higher rated competitive school.

Admissions software systems do not track separate proficiency-based grading fields in the application records. No habits of work and learning are tracked in college admissions offices! A proficiency-based transcript is actually a nuisance. Only GPA (converted from 1-100% grading systems) and test scores are tracked.

A grade of a typical "3" from a proficiency-based applicant is considered a very average GPA and will bring the colleges' applicant statistics down. This is not something the admissions teams want.

A Proficiency-based transcript from a US student does not help competitive colleges improve their goals of higher quality students year over year.

Why is Maine trying to be so "cutting edge" mandating this grading system when colleges and universities around the country aren't ready (and may never be ready!)! The truth is colleges need to differentiate students and the PBD and transcript does not allow that.

While this bill is for an extension, I truly believe the Proficiency-based Diploma law is impacting the future of Maine's high school students in a detrimental way. I urge you to eliminate the Proficiency-based Diploma mandate all together. .

Best Regards,

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