

# BANGOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

73 Harlow Street – Bangor, Maine 04401

[www.bangorschools.net](http://www.bangorschools.net)



Kathy Harris-Smedberg, Ph.D.  
Interim Superintendent and  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

207-992-4167  
Fax: 207-992-4168

April 22, 2021

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Maine State Legislature  
Cross Building, Room 208  
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Chairwoman Daughtry, Chairman Brennan, and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Bangor School Department, I am writing to express our concerns with LD 277, which seeks to prohibit Maine schools from administering the SAT as part of the statewide assessment program.

Maine was the first state to adopt the SAT as its statewide assessment to meet federal accountability requirements in 2006. Following in Maine's footsteps, states and districts across the country support using the SAT as part of their efforts to improve college readiness and break down barriers to college.

Maine districts continue to see the value of the SAT for their students. Despite the uncertainty around statewide testing this year, many Maine districts stepped in and administered the assessment during the school day at no cost to students.

There is also a growing consensus among researchers that offering the SAT at no cost during the school day propels more students into college. A study of Maine's longstanding policy (Hurwitz, Smith, Niu, and Howell. 2014) to offer the SAT to all public high school students found that it increased 4-year college-going rates among Maine public high school graduates by at least 2-3 percentage points overall, and by 10 percentage points among those students who took the SAT only because it was made universal.

The reasons to use the SAT for accountability are compelling. The SAT measures what students are learning in high school, and what research shows they need to know to succeed in college and careers. The SAT connects students to distinct opportunities and benefits like free, personalized practice on Khan Academy and college application fee waivers. Additionally, the SAT offers actionable data reports to educators, students, and families aligned to state standards; and opens the door to college. The bottom line is offering the SAT helps propel students along the path to college and career success.

While many Maine colleges and universities are temporarily adopting test optional admissions policies, the SAT still provides an opportunity for students to distinguish themselves. Students who perform well can still submit their test scores to bolster their applications and apply for scholarships. Continuing to offer the SAT to all students will ensure that all students will have the ability to show their best work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Harris-Smedberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Kathy Harris-Smedberg, Ph.D.  
Interim Superintendent of Schools