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To Whom It May Concern:

We are respectfully requesting a one year extension to our scheduled Department of Education review of the University of Maine at Presque Isle's Elementary, Secondary, and Physical Education programs. Our programs are currently scheduled to be reviewed in January 2016; we are thus requesting that the review process begin January 2017. We detail the reasons for this request below.

We have been preparing for our upcoming program review over the past academic year, and have had numerous conversations about how we, as a faculty, would manage the demands of this review process in context with a series of crucial yet time-intensive institutional demands.

Among those many demands has been the need to continue to deliver the currently established courses and programs with a significantly changed faculty, both in terms of full-time, tenure-line faculty and experienced adjunct instructors. It has been our top priority to maintain and improve the quality of our courses and programs. However, after a series of recent retirements of long-serving senior faculty members, the program has experienced significant changes in regards to personnel. During the course of these personnel changes, which included the hiring of a tenure-line faculty member two years ago to support the addition of a new program (Early Childhood Education) as well as the hiring of an additional tenure-line Elementary Education faculty member this past summer, we have incorporated the following significant changes to our curricula and support structures:

- Revised our courses as necessary to bring them in line with UMPI's proficiency-based approach
- Secured and designed a classroom/curriculum lab that houses our resource materials and children's literature collection
- Mapped our curriculum to the Maine's Common Core Teaching Standards, which have developed into our Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's)
- Revised our Conceptual Framework and its logo to reflect our key theme of opportunity encircled by knowledge, reflection, dispositions, diversity and instructional strategies
- Developed an introductory course sequence for students that began with the 2014-2015 first year students
- Increased our field experience requirements, which begin in the first weeks of the first year and continue through student teaching

- Hired adjunct faculty who have the background and the experience in proficiency education required by our courses, and worked closely with those adjuncts to ensure that their courses meet the needs and the technicalities of a proficiency-based program
- Reviewed and revised our policies in keeping with our new direction
- Re-designed our student and student teaching handbooks to align with our many program changes
- Participated in our campus' initiative to recruit and retain students through direct contact including handwritten notes, e-mails, and campus events for prospective students
- Increased collaboration and site visits with schools from RSU 2 for both students and faculty from both institutions
- Developed partnerships by participating in the University of Maine System program review process as representatives of the College of Education
- Increased collaboration with our partnership schools in Aroostook County as well as throughout the state of Maine and Canadian provinces
- Secured iPads and quality instructional materials for use in our classroom lab

Although this list of initiatives is not exhaustive, we feel that it conveys the amount of time and effort we have committed to the re-development and improvement of our program. All of this is in addition to the numerous other committees and responsibilities we have maintained in assisting the university's movement toward a proficiency-based educational institution.

We are extremely proud of our accomplishments in achieving a comprehensive proficiency-based education program, one designed to meet the needs of our current students as well as future educators and our educational partners within the schools districts serving our region. However, we do not feel that we are at a point where we are prepared to have an external evaluation of our program, given the multiple transitions that we have experienced both in terms of the (ongoing) curriculum revisions and the faculty involved with the development of that curriculum and the delivery and assessment of its programs.

We thus are respectfully requesting an additional year in preparation for our formal review process so that we may ensure we can provide an accurate and effective appraisal of our program that best reflects the knowledge, expertise, goals and vision of its faculty and partnering institutions. This will allow us to finalize our current curricular initiatives and revisions and be thoroughly prepared for the Department's evaluation process, one that will most accurately reflect the current goals and vision of our program.

Most Sincerely,



Barbara Blackstone M.S.S., ATC
Chair, College of Education