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Sent: Friday, March 16, 2018 4:40 PM
To: DOE, SIS <SIS.DOE@maine.gov>
Subject: Social Studies Learning Results

Greetings,

I'm sorry I was unable to attend the hearing re: SS MLR. Please accept my written comments.

My concerns about Social Studies in the State of Maine have less to do with the Maine Learning Results than they do graduation requirements and proficiency-based education.

B. Social studies and history, including American history, government, civics and personal finance--2 years

There is no way that even the best Social Studies teachers among us can possibly meet the MLR as written in two years of high school, and certainly not at the depth at which American citizens should be able to understand, discuss, and use their knowledge and understanding to make decisions in real life situations - political, economic, and more. I'm content with the Learning Results as they are written. In fact I appreciate the level of rigor of the MLR. I believe that the divisiveness in our nation and state at present is a prime example of why the State should consider supporting the MLR as written and increasing the graduation requirement in Social Studies to three, or preferably, four years.

Social Studies is not tested in our traditional standardized tests such as SAT's, so it has become common practice that schools have deemed it acceptable to argue for less time and focus in the Social Studies. I would argue that there is no greater tests than citizenship and life, both of which require, at a critical level, a strong foundation in history, civics, government, and economics.

Working in a proficiency-based school that has used the MLR as guidelines for creating "Learning Targets" within "Measurement Topics," I have witnessed a weakening of rigor in an attempt to broaden the standards to concept-based-only Learning Targets. "Students don't need to know facts because they can look them up on the internet." I disagree. The study of history, civics, government, and economics all require knowledge and understanding of content and skills, as well as overall concepts. We must preserve and re-emphasize MLR in Social Studies that provide specific content topics, skills, and concepts. Without this, I fear that we will continue to move in a direction that leaves our young people unprepared for their roles as citizens, and I worry about what that means for the future of the State of Maine and for the United States.

The time is now to re-invigorate the Social Studies in the State of Maine. Our nation's Founding Fathers understood the necessity of an educated electorate, particularly an electorate that understands history, the Constitution, and the role of citizens in a democratic republic. We can do better. We must do better.

Thank you for your time,

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