



Taconic High School

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Douglas McNally, Principal

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Pittsfield Public Schools

Superintendent, Howard Jacob Eberwein, III, Ed.D.

June 2, 2009

Re: State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Docket ID ED-2009-OESE-0007

My name is Douglas McNally, and I am the Principal of Taconic High School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. I am writing in support of Secretary Duncan's decision to include the College/Career Proficiency measure as one of the fourteen measures used to capture school performance.

I have been the principal of Taconic High School for nearly two decades, and in the last few years, I have seen the Massachusetts Department of Education collaborate with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. These two entities have created a culture where data serves as a catalyst for discussion and action among educators, school boards, and communities in understanding the relationship between high school and college academic performance.

In my school, data on our student's performance in college contributes to an ongoing conversation to align the junior and senior year of high school with first-year expectations in college. For example, when we analyzed our School-to-College Report and realized some of our students weren't prepared for college level work, courses with low expectations were eliminated and graduation requirements were raised. When this improvement strategy was explained to our community, parents recognized that general diplomas with low academic requirements were useless to their children and they joined the school in exploring ways to get students to perform at higher levels.

Candidly, all of our strategies for creating a college-bound culture are not yet fully developed, but for the first time in my tenure, I have quality and meaningful information that ensures my teachers and counselors know and understand a) the key indicators for college success, b) how our efforts are driving improvements, and c) where we need to laser-focus to address remaining deficiencies.

I commend Secretary Duncan for ensuring every high school in the nation understands how its students perform in college. This information is critical to helping our country reach its goal of college and career readiness and success for every graduate.

Sincerely,

Douglas McNally
Principal

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"Our mission is to provide a safe learning environment where students are challenged to work to their academic and social potentials in striving to become responsible, global citizens."