

Priority Notice from the Maine Department of Education



## Unified Message and Recommendation Regarding Grading Practices During Emergency Distance Learning

As many School Administrative Units (SAUs) and schools move into a new phase of implementation of emergency distance learning, focusing on long term practices, many are now wading through conversations around the assessment and evaluation of learning. Some SAUs have already come to decisions around how student learning will be evaluated, if at all, and those plans vary widely, from feedback only to maintaining regular grading practices. We, the Department of Education, Maine School Boards Association, Maine School Superintendents Association, Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities, Maine Education Association, Maine Principals Association, and Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, have a deep conviction that any learning evaluation policies or practices must come from a stance of equity and compassion.

We strongly recommend that SAUs take time to thoughtfully design grading policies and practices that do no harm. Operating from a stance of equity and compassion means beginning with those most marginalized in mind when making decisions. Even during times of regular school instruction, each and every district in the state of Maine had learners dealing with homelessness, food instability, poverty, substance use disorders, and domestic violence, among other stressful and traumatic life situations. Now we see those situations intensifying, and new situations emerging in families that were once stable.

Any evaluation of learning must take into account the reality that many of our learners are in these circumstances. Learning in any of the circumstances noted above is almost impossible, and no student should face a failing grade, or other evaluative suffering, as a result. We encourage SAUs and regions to discuss and determine a system that holds harmless students for whom conditions are outside of their control and as best as possible prevents any further learning inequities.



[Maine DOE Newsroom on Twitter](#) | [Forward to a Friend](#)

[Maine Department of Education](#) | [Maine DOE Newsroom](#) | [Contact Us](#)