

WHERE WE STAND - 2005

We are committed to making **Learning Results** effective through a range of legislative and public initiatives. We believe the following issues are vital to the **economic viability** of the State of Maine. Specifically, we support:

1. **Learning Results implementation** – By 2008, it will be more than ten years since Learning Results became law. Achievement of these standards ensure that Maine students have the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to become productive and fulfilled members of a rapidly changing world. The research clearly shows that the long term economic competitiveness of Maine is directly linked to skill and educational attainment. With the major economic and demographic changes facing our future, it is imperative that we “stay the course” to ensure that **each** student in Maine has the opportunity to succeed. A great deal of hard work has been done to improve our schools and while we may not see the instant rewards, the “the performance of our students now will influence the pattern of our economic success” (Education Week 2/2/02).
2. **Campaign for the Class of 2008** – current high school freshmen are poised to graduate in June 2008 based on demonstrating a basic proficiency in the Maine Learning Results in core areas. This public call to action campaign is designed to support the hard work of educators in implementing the Learning Results and to inform parents, businesses and communities about this new way to graduate. We urge you to contact us to find out what you can do to help.
3. **Educator recruitment and retention** – The good work done a few years ago by the *Task Force on Educator Recruitment and Retention* needs to be recognized as a means to address this issue. We need to continue to recruit and retain quality teachers and principals!
4. Maine needs a more flexible approach to **certifying teachers** in our state. The most important qualification for a good teacher is deep knowledge of the subjects they teach. We need to be able to take advantage of those interested in teaching but from “non-traditional backgrounds” through the expressed alternative pathways for such candidates. Further, we need to encourage and financially support current educators to continually improve their skills through such means as *National Board Certification*.
5. **Funding** - The Coalition has long supported the **Essential Programs and Services** as a more equitable approach to allocate funding to school districts. As the system moves from concept and statute to implementation we must ensure that it is equitable in practice as well as theory, but we must stay the course with this vastly more promising approach.
6. **Maine Learning Technology Initiative** – the results are in...it works! Maine is considered a world leader in the integration of learning technology into the middle schools. Commissioner of Education Sue Gendron has proposed an approach to bring MLTI to all Maine high schools. We must support the continuation of this immensely successful initiative to our high schools. The fact that Maine will be the first state in the nation to fully integrate technology and learning will boost both learning and economic development.
7. **No Child Left Behind**. The goals of this federal legislation are commendable. However, the unintended consequences have the potential of impeding the progress we have made in our own approach to school reform. This federal law is far too prescriptive and takes a negative approach to school improvement by imposing sanctions with the yardstick “annual yearly progress”. We cannot let this legislation stop our forward motion here in Maine. Rather, we must use it as a contextual backdrop for our efforts and reinforce our commitment to implementing Learning Results.
8. We need the political will for true **tax reform**. Mainers showed their faith in the Legislature by defeating the tax cap referendum, trusting the 122nd to work collaboratively to make the hard decisions in terms of cutting spending and finding efficiencies in order to reduce the burden on local property taxpayers.

Success Begins With Education