

Harvard and Wellesley and Tufts, Oh My! (And Did I Mention MIT and Babson?)

competencyworks.org/k-12-higher-education/harvard-and-wellesley-and-tufts-oh-my-and-did-i-mention-mit-and-babson/

I didn't think I'd ever see the elites take a stance regarding proficiency-based learning. Thanks to the leadership of New England Secondary School Consortium, sixty-seven colleges and universities in New England have "provided statements and letters articulating their support for proficiency-based learning and stating – unequivocally – that students with proficiency-based grades and transcripts will not be disadvantaged in any way."

Check out the [NESCC website](#) – you can find the list of institutions of higher education within each state and link to their signed letter with their pledge that **students with proficiency-based transcripts will not be disadvantaged in any way.**



NESCC highlighted some of the themes that came out in the conversations with the colleges and universities:

1. Admissions offices receive a huge variety of transcripts, including transcripts from international schools, home-schooled students, and a wide variety of alternative educational institutions and programs that do not have traditional academic programs, grading practices, or transcripts.
2. Students with non-traditional transcripts – including "proficiency-based" or "competency-based" transcripts – will not be disadvantaged in any way during the admissions process. Colleges and universities simply do not discriminate against students based on the academic program and policies of the sending school, as long as those program and policies are accurately presented and clearly described.
3. As long as the school profile is comprehensive and understandable, and it clearly explains the rigor of the academic program, the technicalities of the school's assessment and grading system, and the characteristics of the graduating class, the admissions office will be able to understand the transcript and properly evaluate the strength of a student's academic record and accomplishments. In short, schools use so many different systems for grading, ranking, and tracking students that a school's system can only be properly understood when a transcript is accompanied by a comprehensive school profile. A class rank or GPA, for example, doesn't mean much unless the admissions office also has the "key" (i.e., the school profile) that it needs to understand the applicant's academic accomplishments and abilities in context.
4. All the colleges and universities we spoke with strongly support public schools that are working to improve student preparation for postsecondary learning and success, including instructional strategies that equip students with the essential knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits they need to thrive and persist in a collegiate academic program and earn a degree.

In addition, the Board of New England Higher Education [published an article](#) in the *New England Journal of Higher Education*.

Well done, NESCC!! Now is the time for states and intermediaries to forward this to the colleges and universities in their region to ask them to take the pledge. Let us know and we can keep a running list and links on the wiki of all the colleges and universities that have taken the **Proficiency Pledge**.

