

## TESTIMONY REGARDING HB 6624

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“The big idea behind a mastery-based system is that failure is no longer an option and that students must demonstrate mastery before advancing on to the next lesson – A, B, or try again.” Susan Patrick, THE Journal interview “Beyond Seat Time: Advancing Mastery-Based Learning.”

Many high schools do not use teaching, testing, grading, and reporting methods that require students to prove they have actually acquired the most critically important knowledge and skills. In fact, many high schools give out thousands of grades, report cards, and diplomas every year; but many of those schools would not be able to tell exactly what their students have learned or not learned.

With mastery-based diplomas we will change that.

In this system

1. All students must demonstrate what they have learned before moving on. Failure is no longer an option for students – they either earn the equivalent of an A or B or they have to try again until they master the required learning standards.
2. Competencies include explicit, measureable, transferable learning objectives that empower students. The learning expectations in each course are clearly described and communicated and students know precisely where they stand throughout the course – for example, a student will know that she has achieved three of six learning standards, but that she needs to work harder in order to master the last three before she can pass the course.
3. Common, consistent methods are used to evaluate student learning. In many schools, different learning expectations are applied from course to course, and different methods and criteria are used to evaluate what students have learned. Mastery-based learning applies the same standards to all students, while teachers use consistent methods of evaluating and reporting on student learning – everyone knows precisely what grades stand for and what each student has learned.
4. While learning expectations are fixed, teachers and students have more flexibility in what is taught and how it is learned. Even though learning expectations and assessments are common and consistent, teachers can adjust their teaching to better match the way his students learn. Students can be given an assignment to research an American president for example – but they choose which president to study and how to demonstrate what they have learned. As long as students meet the course expectations and demonstrate a strong understanding of the election system, the executive branch of the federal government, and the role of the American president –

teachers can teach and students can learn in the ways that work best for them.

Please give us the option to make learning the constant and time the variable. Mastery of standards instead of the accumulation of credits will guarantee that our high school graduates will be much better prepared for college, work, and adult life! That is why students should be able to graduate through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, adopted by the State Board of Education as stated in HB 6624, Sec.10, Subsection (f) of section 10-221a.