



Concerns about Bill A4121.

From NJ21st Team <team@nj21st.com>

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Cc [REDACTED] boe@bhpsnj.org <boe@bhpsnj.org>; Mikie Sherrill <info@mikiesherrill.com>; Editor in Chief [REDACTED]

Dear Everyone,

I am writing to express my concern about Bill A4121.

The graduation exam has always served two purposes -

- It evaluated whether our students met an agreed upon standard
- It provided a consistent statewide measure of district performance

If the first purpose is removed then the second should be strengthened.

The value of the proficiency exam is tied less to individual students and more to whether the educational institutions responsible for them are doing their jobs. Without an **across** the board benchmark, NJ loses its a critical tool in spotting achievement gaps, evaluate district performance and identifying whether local grading practices are masking deeper problems.

This bill needs way more consideration and adjustment before being advanced.

Removing a statewide standard without replacing it with a strong measurement system in a moment when proficiency levels are already declining across multiple grades and subject areas is not responsible policy -it comes across as impulsive and borderline reckless.

Our state cannot afford to weaken its only objective indicator of how well students are being prepared - eliminating a major accountability invites further erosion of student outcomes and less opportunity for families and stakeholders to evaluate how well the schools they are funding and entrusting their children with are performing.

1. Maintain statewide proficiency exams as an accountability measure even if the graduation requirement is repealed - results must remain public and comparable across districts so families, communities and policymakers can understand where improvement is needed.

2. Build in a mechanisms where test results act as a catalyst for meaningful consequences - required improvement plans, stronger DOE oversight, targeted support for struggling schools and improvement timelines.
3. Guaranteed access to free remediation courses at community colleges so they can succeed in attaining a four year degree or in learning a trade
4. A mechanism for defining chronic failure in **districts** and allow parents to seek alternative placements including inter-district choice, charter schools or private schools.

NJ must have a measure in determining whether it is meeting its constitutional mandate to provide a thorough and efficient education to every child.

New Jersey can modernize its graduation requirements without lowering expectations. I respectfully ask that you preserve the statewide proficiency exams as a measurement tool, publish the results clearly and impose real consequences when districts fall short.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
John Migueis
NJ21st

<https://nj21st.com/>

