

OPINION: Independent Reports show progress at New Bedford High School – What That Means

Dropout rates “slashed” and **milestone graduation levels**. When at least three independent bodies report significant progress and high standards, it’s certainly time to give credit to the students and staff of New Bedford High School (NBHS).

New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

Several months ago the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reported on its comprehensive evaluation of New Bedford High School, finding that the school met the rigorous NAESC standards and deserved reaccreditation. Much of the NAESC committee’s commendations focused on instruction, and the strength of teaching and learning at the school is further validated by results from recent Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

The College Board

AP is administered by the College Board, a long standing arbiter of rigorous college preparatory work. Leading researcher Nat Malkus has called AP the “predominant form of advanced coursework in public schools.” The more students challenge themselves with AP curriculum the more academic standards are raised. At New Bedford High this is the bar that is set for students.

New Bedford most recently had almost 240 AP test takers, meaning a greater proportion of NBHS students than ever before are participating in rigorous AP. Actual performance in AP is also approaching record levels, with approximately 35% of school students scoring a three or higher. The College Board notes that scores of three or higher are an important indicator. Student participation in AP moves them closer to

college level work and those students who score three or higher are statistically more likely to succeed in their chosen college path.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

With higher levels of AP performance, and independent approval of teaching and learning by NAESC, little wonder that the Massachusetts Department Of Elementary & Secondary Education states NBHS has achieved milestones in its higher graduation rates and lower dropout numbers.

There you have it, according three of the most credible judges of high schools standards, the NAESC, the College Board and MADESE, hard work by the students and staff of New Bedford High School is paying off.

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