



Great Schools Partnership
at the Mitchell Institute
22 Monument Square, Suite 404
Portland, Maine 04101
207-773-0505

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Stephen Abbott, Director of Communications: 207-773-0505 / sabbott@greatschoolspartnership.org
Jeanne Tucker, Principal, Mt. Abram Regional High School: 207-678-2701 / jtucker@sad58.org

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Mt. Abram to Participate in National Study on College Readiness *The school's exemplary college-ready programs attract the notice of national experts*

SALEM TOWNSHIP, ME: Mt. Abram Regional High School has been selected to participate in the College Readiness Evaluation for Schools and Teachers (CREST), a landmark study to determine how some of the nation's most effective high schools prepare their students for college and careers. As only one of 30 schools in the country to be so honored, Mt. Abram was selected for its exemplary college-readiness programs and practices following an intensive nomination and research process. On November 5–6, evaluators from the CREST program will be visiting Mt. Abram to learn more about the innovative college-ready programs that have been used by the school to effectively increase college-enrollment rates.

For the past seven years, Mt. Abram has experienced a steady and impressive increase in its post-secondary acceptance rates, which have been above 80% for three of the past four years, up from a low of only 53% in 2000, according to internal school data. In addition, Mt. Abram has been working to increase early college opportunities (also known as dual enrollment), which allow high school students to take college-level courses for both high school and college credit. Currently, three Central Maine Community College courses are being offered at Mt. Abram, and 12 students are enrolled in these classes along with adults from the community. Two students are taking college courses at the University of Maine at Farmington, and 68 students are enrolled in one or more of Mt. Abram's six Advanced Placement courses, which also provide high school students with the opportunity to potentially earn college credit. Three new Advanced Placement courses were added to the curriculum this year, and—unlike some schools that limit Advanced Placement access to only the highest-achieving students—all six courses at Mt. Abram are open to any interested student.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the CREST study is being conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center in Eugene, Oregon, under the direction of Dr. David Conley, a nationally recognized authority on college preparedness and the author of *College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready*. The goal of the CREST project is to develop an online instrument that can help schools assess their ability to prepare students for college, and to provide recommendations for improving the college readiness of all students. Data collected from each of the participating schools will help define common standards and measurements for determining college readiness nationwide.

For the past four years, Mt. Abram has been participating in the Promising Futures High Schools grant program administered by the Great Schools Partnership at the Mitchell Institute (formerly the Great Maine Schools Project) and also funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As part of this grant, Mt. Abram has been working to strengthen its academic program and increase the aspirations and achievement of its students. Mt. Abram Regional High School is part of MSAD #58, which comprises the towns of Avon, Eustis, Kingfield, Phillips, and Strong.