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As a graduate of Louisiana public schools, I believe it is time to raise our academic standards. High K-12 standards ensure every child receives a quality education, no matter his or her neighborhood or socioeconomic background. High standards help give children the tools they need to succeed today so they may achieve all of their dreams tomorrow.

I graduated from a rural high school in Louisiana in 2009 with what I thought was a great grade point average and ACT score. However, when I applied to colleges as a first-generation student, I was denied or waitlisted because I could not compete with other applicants across the country. It did not seem to matter that I was a high-performing and curious student capable of much more than the “busy work” assigned to me in high school. Without a track record of success in college-level classes, admissions officers did not consider me college-ready. Ultimately accepted to Dillard University, I became one of the few from my class to attend college, while most of my peers either did not go at all or did not complete their undergraduate studies due to disinterest or unpreparedness.

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