

**Testimony on LD 1933 Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115:
The Credentialing of Education Personnel, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education,
State Board of Education
From University of Maine Dean of the College of Education and Human Development Penny Bishop**

February 8, 2022

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Penny Bishop. Last July, I was appointed Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine. I'd like to thank you for all that you've done to support Maine students and educators during this extremely difficult time. I also want to acknowledge the significant work undertaken by the State Board of Education and the Department to carefully revise the teaching endorsements articulated in Chapter 115.

As the College of Education and Human Development at Maine's research university, we serve the state's schools in this shifting global landscape in three main ways. We prepare teachers and educational leaders; our outreach programs encompass the entire state; and we conduct research that informs policy and practice. In fact, the University of Maine was recently awarded the prestigious RI (Very High Research Activity) designation, a recognition that is held by only 3.7% (146) of the nearly 4000 colleges and universities in the U.S. The College offers six programs that lead to initial teacher certification and seven graduate programs that address the educational needs of practicing teachers and educational leaders. Through our leadership, thousands of PreK-12 students in communities throughout Maine experience positive behavioral interventions at school and beyond, and our programs in literacy and special education ensure the most vulnerable among them get the services and support they need.

As someone who is "from away," I can tell you that Maine is seen as an innovator in education. We in other states watched admirably while you led the nation in integrating technology in public schools. Arriving here this summer from Vermont, I was similarly impressed by how the state had pivoted to remote learning. While many states implemented a one-size-fits-all, online curriculum, Maine's Department of Education provided project-based, student-centered online modules to teachers and families in order to ensure high quality learning experiences for its children and youth. I have spent the past twenty years conducting research on education and I will say that you can be proud of how these resources represent the best of what we know to be successful for students.

None of this may seem relevant in a hearing on Chapter 115, but please allow me to tell you why it is precisely the point. The work of teaching is complex, and arguably never more so than now. The National Academy of Sciences, a nonprofit organization consisting of the country's leading researchers, has demonstrated that effective teachers draw on three types of knowledge: 1) *knowledge of learners*, development, and learning processes; 2) *knowledge of the subject matter*, curriculum, and instructional design for that curriculum, and 3) *knowledge of teaching* more generally, that is, how to assess student work, how to teach diverse learners, how to manage a classroom. Research conducted here in Maine by my colleagues at the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) supports these national research findings. Section 7 of Chapter 115 allows for the provision of an Emergency Teacher Certificate, which would enable people to teach Maine students without any

of this preparation. Yet research tells us three things about emergency teacher certification that I know we want to avoid.

First, hiring teachers without preparation negatively affects student learning.

Nationally, higher numbers of emergency certified teachers are associated with lower levels of student learning. Emergency certified teachers are also rated lower than the teachers with preparation in every category by their principals, and teachers with preparation also have higher levels of efficacy, which is also linked to higher levels of student learning. In short, well-prepared teachers consistently produce significantly higher student outcomes than do unprepared or emergency certified teachers.

Second, hiring teachers without preparation negatively affects local economies.

Emergency certified teachers leave teaching at a higher rate than those who complete teacher education programs. In fact, beginning teachers with little preparation are 2½ times more likely to leave the teaching profession after their first year, compared to their well-prepared peers. Of course, teacher turnover is bad for student learning. It is also bad for budgets. The Learning Policy Institute estimates that rural and suburban school districts spend, on average, \$10,000 each time they need to replace a teacher. This consists of school and district expenses related to separation, recruitment, hiring, and training. For urban settings, this rate comes in even higher, at \$21,000.

What does this mean for Maine? A recent MEPRI report (2020) calculated Maine's annual teacher turnover rate at 8.7%. This suggests that, of the approximately 15,000 teachers employed in Maine schools this year, 1,300 teaching positions will need to be refilled next year. Statewide, then, we will spend around \$13,000,000 as a result of teacher turnover, money that would be better invested directly in our classrooms and raising pay for the profession.

What does this mean for local communities? Let's take RSU25 as an example. RSU25 serves the communities of Bucksport, Orland, Prospect, and Verona Island. Over the past three years, it has replaced an average of 16 teachers each year. This represents an additional \$160,000 annual expenditure. Of course, we cannot control all teacher turnover, but retaining even half of those teachers would save that greater community \$80,000 annually. Well prepared teachers stay in schools longer. Strong preparation makes it more likely they will remain in the profession, which results in fewer disruptions to student learning and fewer dollars being spent unnecessarily.

Third, hiring teachers without preparation negatively affects equity.

As you have heard from my colleagues, communities with fewer resources suffer the most from the shortage of credentialed teachers. The Governor's Economic Recovery Committee Co-chairs Josh Broder and Laurie Lachance noted in their *Recommendations to Sustain and Grow Maine's Economy* that "to realize a future in which all Maine people can reach their full potential, we must address structural inequity and make foundational investments to address racial, economic, and geographic disparities." This is consistent with the Maine Department of Education's own strategic priorities, including to "promote educational excellence and equity for all Maine learners." The largest concentrations of teachers who are unprepared tend to be in the highest need areas, resulting in a disproportionate effect on a state's most disadvantaged students. Enabling an Emergency Teacher Certificate has the likely effect of working against the hard work and investments in equity already accomplished by this Committee, the Department and Maine schools.

In closing, I recognize that the Emergency Teacher Certificate came out of LD 1189. Because of this, the State Board of Education was limited in its ability to respond to concerns regarding it. We have the chance now, however, to proceed cautiously with regard to emergency credentials. Fortunately, Chapter 115 contains other suitable options that allow schools the flexibility they require to respond to this challenging teacher workforce issue, such the Conditional Certificate, or – in a true emergency – a waiver from the Commissioner of

Education. As we look beyond the pandemic – and surely we must – I urge you not to institutionalize what was intended to be a temporary measure without first studying its potential effects on the state of Maine. Like you, my colleagues in the university system and I are working hard to address the teacher pipeline problem. We are seeking to eliminate barriers, reduce obstacles, and get more adequately prepared teachers into Maine schools. We are submitting federal grants and we are partnering with superintendents and school boards to pilot teacher residencies. We are collaborating with communities to develop Grow-Your-Own models, and we are launching out-of-state recruitment campaigns. Each of these strategies will enable us to strengthen our teacher workforce by placing well-prepared educators in classrooms. I look forward to working together – for the children and youth of Maine – to do just this.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

Sources

Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Schachner, A., & Wojcikiewicz, S. (with Cantor, P., & Osher, D.). (2021). *Educator learning to enact the science of learning and development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/859.776>.

Darling-Hammond, L., Furger, R., Shields, P. M., & Sutchter, L. (2016). *Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13, 42.

Johnson, A., Hawes, K., & Olson, S. (2020). *Educator Recruitment and Retention in Maine Schools*. Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, & Evaluation.

Governor's Economic Recovery Committee. (2020). *Recommendations to Sustain and Grow Maine's Economy*. [maine.gov/future/economicrecovery](https://www.maine.gov/future/economicrecovery).

Morris, L., & Johnson, A. (2018). *Teacher Turnover in Maine: Analysis of Staffing Patterns from 2005-06 to 2016-17*. Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, & Evaluation.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020). *Changing Expectations for the K-12 Teacher Workforce: Policies, Preservice Education, Professional Development, and the Workplace*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25603>.

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/262.960>.