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I would like to express my support for the plan laid out by Commissioner Makin. I have worked at Child Development Services for seven years as a supervisor of a team of up to 15 people. I am in the community daily and meet with both public and private schools to plan for students regularly. The way CDS is set up now is “clunky” at best. Having two different entities providing special education proves difficult as no matter how hard we try, we don’t all do it the same. The families learn one set of people, one way of doing things, and then sometimes just a few short months later switch not only service providers, but people responsible for their care and paperwork. Moving FAPE responsibilities to the public schools helps to iron out that bump that is the transfer from one entity to another, by having them be the responsible party as soon as the child is eligible. Another big challenge is getting buy in from schools. At this time, we still have schools that will not let us into their buildings to provide services, so children are going without merely because we are two separate entities. Some schools agree to help with services if they are able, which is very much appreciated, but it can be challenging as they can choose to provide services to one child, but not the others, leaving us in the lurch. I absolutely understand that we are ALL in a staffing crisis, CDS included, so that does also have an impact on school’s, and CDS’s abilities to provide services, but the inconsistency of what schools provide makes CDS’s jobs even more difficult. Overall, the Commissioner’s plan addresses many of the major flaws in the way Maine does special education for children 3-5 at this time. Will it fix everything? No, but it will have a significant impact in a positive way on the services we as a state are able to provide to our children moving forward. We will need to continue to explore options, revamp and adjust as we move forward with any plan, including this one, but I feel strongly we would be moving in the right direction for Maine’s children.