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LD 345

My name is Laurie Brown, I live in Fryeburg. I am speaking as a private citizen.

I have been observing the testimony presented before this committee today and have some questions or comments.

In speaking for this bill, I have watched administrators from larger school departments. My concern relates to the rest of Maine, those smaller districts, those without most public resources such as Early Head Start and public Pre K.

The administrator from Gorham schools was looking forward to expanding the pre K options and hiring CDS trained employees with better wages and compensation packages. She has that option because, according to CDS (repeatedly shared by management in negotiations) CDS was not interested in rewarding employees who gained their master's degree. They shared they were only concerned that the employee had the minimum credentials for the job. That said, by providing the Pathways project, allowing employees the opportunity to complete teaching degrees for certification and going beyond to master's degrees, all on the company dime, they opened the doors for employees to train at CDS and when their education was completed move on to better paying positions, which were academic year instead of calendar. What an opportunity missed by CDS, to acknowledge the employee effort and reward them when it was accomplished.

I am also thinking that would relieve the public school of the burden of developing programming when there are established programs in place.

I have reached out to staff state wide asking them to share their stories in an effort to provide you with a richer understanding of the nuances that are specific to CDS.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your efforts in support of the children of Maine.