

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Opposition of LD 396: An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools
DATE: February 27, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

We fully support the research that clearly states that a later start for high schools is a benefit to students. There are high schools in Maine that had the ability to shift to a later start and that is working for them. However, this is not the case for all schools.

Offering a later start to the school day would be extremely difficult for scheduling and bussing in some schools. High Schools who share a CTE Center/Region must have a similar calendar or else the students who must travel different distances will miss classes. Having these students who travel and attend a period of school prior to leaving on the bus has also helped with Drop Out Prevention for the sending schools.

Starting school at a later time could also reduce the number of instructional minutes for some high school student athletes who participate in activities that are played on a field with no lights. To get these activities in before it gets dark, particularly in the Fall, students would have to leave school early or participate in fewer games.

Many families depend on the older students to be home when the younger students get home off the bus. If the high school students come home after the younger students, the younger students may be left alone for a period of time while some families depend on older students to go to work after school in order to support their families.

Ultimately, LD 396 is a "One Size Fits All" bill that will not work in a local control state. Local communities make decisions that best meet the needs of their students. For these reasons, the MPA encourages the Committee to vote in opposition to LD 396.