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The need to increase minimum pay for teachers in Portland across the state of Maine is deeply urgent. Our schools are in crisis and our teachers are burnt out and will be leaving en masse if you do not take action ASAP. We are the 37th lowest salary state for teachers in the country and the lowest in all of New England. This is coupled with the fact that much of Maine has become outlandishly expensive to live in. Teachers cannot afford to live in the districts where they teach. My household is two working Portland Public Schools teachers and we are not able to buy a house anywhere near where we work. We doubt we'd be able to have children on our current salaries. This is atrocious. We will not stay in Maine and continue to abide this. We could move to Massachusetts and not only buy a house for much cheaper, but get paid 30% more than we are paid now. We consider it all the time, not because we don't enjoy living in Maine and want to stay, but because the situation with teacher pay is untenable and frankly offensive. We all got Master's Degrees to attain these jobs, and yet we barely make enough to get by let alone to save money. This is going to become a crisis and in fact has already begun. We have so many inexperienced and new teachers in our district who will not stay because the jobs are too difficult and too underpaid. This is urgent and requires your action now.