

Jonathan Dubay
Handwriting Success, LLC
LD 78

Testimony regarding L.D. 78 —Thursday, February 27, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

Whereas: Maine School districts struggle with low reading and literacy levels, and

Whereas: Evidence from research suggests that direct instruction in handwriting in elementary grades accelerates literacy acquisition, reading and composition skills, saving classroom time when combined with literacy and language arts instruction, and

Whereas: As written, L.D. 78 as submitted on January 6, 2025, (1) uses the unmodified word “cursive”, causing confusion and therefore resistance by stakeholders, and (2) may limit local control, and

Whereas: While there is abundant and compelling scientific evidence that integrating direct handwriting instruction into literacy and language arts curriculum has significant benefits, there is no evidence that cursive-mode handwriting is more beneficial than print-mode handwriting, except perhaps for students in grades 3 and above developing writing fluency as appropriate for student’s developmental level, and

Whereas: There is an undue emphasis in the public’s view, based in part on misinterpretation of facts and unsupported assumptions, that there are benefits solely to cursive-mode handwriting in (1) brain development, (2) reading historical documents, or (3) developing a signature, and

Whereas: There are many educational handwriting styles and curricula available today, where some methods (such as those based on continuous cursive styles) require students to relearn the alphabet in order to write in the cursive mode, where other methods (such as those based on the Italic or Chancery style) do not, and

Whereas: Maine’s process to periodically amend the Maine Learning Results, involving reviewing standards, working together with stakeholders, and listening to public comment can establish guidelines for best practices under this legislative guidance, and

Whereas: While there are many states that have already enacted “cursive” mandates, Maine has the opportunity to lead the nation in guidance that is clear and allows local stakeholders to discern and establish best practices,

Therefore: I, Jonathan Dubay, CEO and Curriculum Specialist for Handwriting Success, LLC, testify in support of amending L.D. 78 to read as follows,

“Beginning July 1, 2026, the parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements adopted by the department pursuant to section 6209 for English language arts must provide for regular instruction in and opportunities to use print-mode handwriting, and cursive-mode handwriting when developmentally appropriate for the student, continuing to the end of grade 5. The instruction must use best practices to enable students to demonstrate fluency in cursive handwriting by the end of grade 5.”

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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