

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: In Opposition of LD 168: An Act to Improve Safety in Public
Schools by Requiring Silent Electronic Notification Systems in
Classrooms**
DATE: March 13, 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.

I am here today on behalf of the MPA Legislative Committee to express our opposition to LD 168. While we strongly support efforts to enhance school safety, we believe this bill presents significant challenges that outweigh its intended benefits.

Every school in Maine is already required to have a comprehensive safety plan in place. Schools and districts have worked closely with the Department of Education's Office of School Safety Center to develop and implement plans that are tailored to the specific needs of their communities. These plans ensure that staff and local emergency responders are prepared to act efficiently in the event of an emergency.

While we fully recognize the importance of keeping families informed about school incidents, requiring an automatic notification to parents at the same time as school security personnel and law enforcement could inadvertently delay emergency response efforts. In a crisis, first responders must be able to focus entirely on securing the school and ensuring student safety. A simultaneous notification to parents could lead to an influx of calls, traffic congestion around the school, and unnecessary panic—all of which could hinder response times.

Additionally, we are deeply concerned about the financial burden this mandate would place on school districts. Local budgets are already stretched thin, and requiring the installation of silent electronic notification systems in every classroom would impose a significant and unfunded cost. Without dedicated funding, schools may be forced to reallocate resources away from essential student learning programs, negatively impacting educational outcomes.

For these reasons, the MPA urges the committee to oppose LD 168. While we share the goal of making schools safer, we believe that existing safety plans, developed in collaboration with state experts, provide a more effective and financially responsible approach.