

John Soifer
South China
LD 470

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to encourage and request that you invest in the retention of new teachers, their success and effectiveness with the improved mentoring reforms in L.D. 470.

I am writing as citizen, former business owner, father of two successful sons who left Maine for more opportunities, twenty-five year teacher who retired at 70, mentor for many new and student teachers and a current RSU 18 school board member.

With the unemployment rate is as low as it has ever been, and schools struggling to fill openings, it is essential that more is done to assure the new teachers support is multi-faceted and successful. Study after study has pointed out that support of new teachers by an experienced teacher, in their building!, is a critical factor in their long-term success and retention. These are the two critical factors that the bill should seek to remedy: future excellence and long-term retention as a career educator!

Research has shown that there is nothing more likely to produce these results than effective mentoring. Mentoring done seriously and effectively is a lot of extra work on already often overloaded career teachers. Financial incentives along with a structured program are absolutely necessary. Honestly, mentoring needs to be with a career teacher in the same building who is willing to do the hard work to support a new educator feel successful and valued as they learn more about how to do a difficult job better from a master educator. It is an identical model to tried and true apprenticeship in so many vocations.

Mentor teachers need incentives such as recertification credits, to have a reduced load, being excused from unnecessary school duties and designated time to meet with their new teacher.

Please do what you know needs to be done for our children, our communities and our State for the future..

Thank you for your time in reading my testimony on Bill LD 470,

John Soifer
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