



Testimony in Opposition of LD 482: An Act to Expand Educational Opportunities and Broaden Educational Services for Students Enrolled in Equivalent Instruction Programs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Gay Anne McDonald and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the MADSEC Legislative Committee pursuant to LD 482: An Act to Expand Educational Opportunities and Broaden Educational Services for Students Enrolled in Equivalent Instruction Programs. MADSEC provides testimony in strong opposition to this piece of legislation.

LD 482 creates a system where public funds—resources meant to serve all students—are funneled into private institutions that are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. Private schools are not required to provide the full range of supports and services that public schools must offer under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This means that students with disabilities who leave the public school system for private education may not receive the same legal protections, specialized instruction, or individualized support that their Individualized Education Program (IEP) ensures.

Additionally, LD 482 provides for students attending private schools to access public school resources, such as extracurricular programs, educational services, and public school facilities—while the private schools themselves are not required to reinvest in public education or serve all students equitably. MADSEC fully supports the opportunity for students to participate in their community schools - the significant concern is that LD 482 funnels public funds to private schools and away from the very resources the student would be accessing.

MADSEC acknowledges parental choice and the right to enroll their child in homeschool instruction or private education, however, strongly believes public tax dollars should be invested in strengthening our public schools, where all students - regardless of ability- are entitled to equitable access to education.

Education is not a business; it is a fundamental right and a public good designed to foster growth, equity, and opportunity for all students. Public schools are designed to serve every student, regardless of ability, background, or financial means. By diverting taxpayer dollars to private institutions, LD 482 weakens public education and risks leaving students with disabilities without access to the specialized services and supports they require.

Rather than shifting funding to private education that is not bound by the same obligations as public education, Maine needs to focus on strengthening its public school system—ensuring that all students,

Lesley Snyer, President | RSU 89
• Dr. Deb Murphy, President- Elect | RSU 2
Jody Raymond, Vice President | Stillwater Academy
Angela Moore, Secretary | Brewer School Dept.
Cheryl Mercier, Treasurer | RSU 18
Kathy Hamblen, Past President | Gorham School Dept.

49 Community Dr., #1
Augusta, ME 04330
gmcdonald@madsec.org
www.madsec.org



particularly those with disabilities, receive the free, appropriate, public, and inclusive education they deserve.

MADSEC strongly urges the Committee to vote 'ought not to pass' LD 482 and continue the focus on policies that enhance public education for all students. We remain committed to working collaboratively on solutions that prioritize inclusion and compliance with federal and state special education laws within Maine's public school system.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to Maine's educational system. I am happy to answer any questions or collaborate further to ensure that all Maine students receive the education they deserve.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Gay Anne McDonald". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Gay Anne McDonald
Executive Director