

# MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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**TO:** Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry  
**FROM:** Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee  
**RE:** In Opposition of LD 895: An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program  
**DATE:** March 13, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. 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.

The MPA Legislative Committee is in opposition of LD 895, *An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program*. While we fully support the value of immersive outdoor education and recognize its benefits for Maine students, I must express my opposition to this bill as currently written.

Maine is a local control state, where decisions about education should be made at the local level, ensuring that schools and communities retain the flexibility to choose the best programs for their students. While this bill seeks to expand outdoor education opportunities, it does so by designating funding exclusively to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, limiting competition and excluding other well-established outdoor education programs that currently operate across the state.

There are numerous organizations in Maine that have a strong track record of providing high-quality outdoor education experiences for students. These programs should not be sidelined in favor of a single entity. A competitive grant process that allows all qualified organizations to apply would better serve students, ensuring diversity in educational approaches and allowing schools to select the program that best fits their needs.

We urge the committee to reconsider the funding structure of LD 895 and instead support a broader, more equitable approach that allows multiple outdoor education providers to participate. Expanding opportunities for students should not come at the cost of fairness, choice, and local control.