

# MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



50 Industrial Drive  
Augusta, Maine 04330  
(207) 622-0217

Email: [mpa@mpa.cc](mailto:mpa@mpa.cc)

Websites:  
<https://mpaprof.org>  
<https://mpa.cc>

**Kimberly Liscomb**  
Cony Middle/High  
School  
President

**Stephen Bell**  
Dexter Regional High  
School  
President-elect

**Michael R. Burnham**  
Executive Director  
Interscholastic Division

**Holly D. Blair**  
Executive Director  
Professional Division

**Michael G. Bisson**  
Assistant Director

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**TO:** Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
**FROM:** Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee  
**RE:** In Support of LD 628: An Act Regarding Eligibility to Apply for a Department of Education Diploma  
**DATE:** March 18, 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.

The MPA Legislative Committee supports the passing of LD 628. This bill provides an essential alternative pathway to graduation for students who have faced significant disruptions in their education and, despite their best efforts, are unable to meet the traditional credit or grade requirements set by their local high school.

During a student's fourth year of high school, administrators and guidance counselors work closely with those who are struggling, offering support and identifying solutions to help them succeed. However, some students encounter circumstances beyond their control—such as medical issues, family hardships, or other life challenges—that make it difficult for them to graduate through traditional means. LD 628 ensures that these students are not left without options by allowing them to earn a Department of Education diploma if they are unable to meet their local school's specific graduation requirements.

This bill does not lower academic standards but instead recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work for every student. It provides a structured and fair process for ensuring that students who demonstrate resilience and determination have a chance to move forward with their education and careers. Without this option, some students may be left without a pathway to graduation, limiting their future opportunities.

For these reasons, we urge you to support LD 628. This bill will help ensure that Maine's students, regardless of the challenges they face, have a path to earning a diploma and achieving future success.