

GORHAM SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Superintendent

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March 26, 2025

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Chair
Representative Kelly Murphy, Chair
Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Opposition to LD 607

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write in strong opposition to LD 607, which mandates that Superintendents approve agreements for students to attend schools outside their residency if the receiving school has capacity. This bill presents two major concerns.

First, it assumes that cost implications arise only from additional staffing needs, ignoring other administrative burdens. Time is a cost—time spent communicating with families, monitoring attendance, addressing behavioral issues, and providing support. Even when additional staff is unnecessary, these obligations place a significant strain on the receiving district.

Second, this bill strips decision-making flexibility from Superintendents, who are best positioned to evaluate their schools, programs, and communities. We must retain the ability to determine what is in the best educational interest of each student.

Consider a real example: In 2022-2023, I approved a Superintendent's Agreement for two high school students seeking a fresh start due to bullying concerns. Unfortunately, one student engaged in serious misconduct, including sexual harassment and drug dealing. Though no additional staff was required, the administrative time dedicated to managing this case was substantial, detracting from resident students. Under LD 607, I would have had no discretion to reconsider the agreement, ultimately failing both the student and our district.

I urge you to vote NO on LD 607, preserving local decision-making authority to ensure the best educational outcomes for all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather J. P.", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Superintendent of Schools
Gorham School Department