

Matthew Cyr  
RSU 34  
LD 660

Testimony in Opposition to LD 660: An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula.

Presented to the Maine State Legislature

Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 660: An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula . While we fully support transparency and public engagement in our schools, this bill introduces requirements that are not only duplicative and unnecessary but would also place an overwhelming burden on every school district in Maine.

The proposed legislation mandates the recording and archiving of all professional development (PD) sessions, allows public attendance at these sessions, and requires each School Administrative Unit (SAU) to create and maintain an online portal listing all curricula, guest speakers, teacher attendance at PD sessions, and every source material used for classroom instruction. While transparency is essential, these mandates would divert critical time and resources away from student learning and meaningful educational improvements.

Concerns with the Proposed Mandates:

Significant Administrative Burden:

The logistical challenges of recording, archiving, and publicly maintaining records of all PD sessions would require significant additional personnel and technological resources, creating a financial strain on already limited school budgets.

Chilling Effect on Professional Development:

Effective professional development thrives in an environment where educators can openly discuss strategies, share challenges, and explore new ideas. Making these sessions public could discourage honest and productive dialogue, ultimately harming instructional growth.

Overreach in Curriculum Implementation:

The bill mandates that curriculum must be implemented "without change," which directly conflicts with best practices in education. Teachers must have the flexibility to adapt instruction to meet the needs of their students, including those requiring additional support or enrichment.

Existing Transparency Measures:

Schools already provide extensive transparency through curriculum review committees, school board meetings, and publicly available instructional materials. The additional requirements in this bill would duplicate existing efforts while increasing costs and administrative complexity.

Unintended Consequences for Instruction:

Requiring a rigid, unchangeable curriculum would hinder the ability of educators to differentiate instruction, accommodate diverse learning styles, and respond to real-time student needs. This is antithetical to student-centered learning and could negatively impact educational outcomes.

We urge the Legislature to consider the far-reaching consequences of this bill and its potential to undermine both the quality of professional development for educators and the ability of teachers to tailor instruction to their students. Our schools remain committed to transparency and public involvement, but this proposal is not the right approach. Instead, we advocate for solutions that balance public access with the flexibility and trust necessary for schools to serve their students effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Cyr  
RSU 34 Superintendent  
Alton, Bradley, Old Town