

Jenna MacPhie
Scarborough
LD 607

Hello,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 607, An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units, which is currently before the legislative committee.

As a resident of Scarborough and a member of the School Building Advisory Committee (SBAC), I am deeply involved in efforts to address the challenges posed by our aging and overcrowded public schools. Our committee is actively working toward a solution that will be put before voters in a referendum this November. From this vantage point, I have gained a comprehensive understanding of the significant limitations on space available to accommodate our own students, let alone those from outside our district.

For example, next year, Scarborough Middle School will be forced to conduct six lunch periods—well beyond the Department of Education's recommendation of three—simply to fit all students into the undersized cafeteria. This overcrowding has serious consequences, with some students leaving class midway to eat and then returning for only the last 15 minutes of instruction. This disruption severely undermines the educational experience and is just one example of the strain our district is already facing.

I urge you not to approve LD 607, as it would undermine the ability of our school district to manage its resources effectively. Under current law, superintendents have the discretion to assess and approve requests for student transfers between districts based on available space and local priorities. However, LD 607 would severely limit this discretion, making it more difficult for superintendents to deny requests that could exacerbate our overcrowding and place undue pressure on our already strained resources.

Additionally, this bill would impose an unfair financial burden on local taxpayers. Scarborough already relies heavily on local funding, with nearly 88% of the per-pupil costs covered by local taxpayers. If this bill passes, it would further shift the financial responsibility to our residents, who would be expected to absorb the costs associated with educating students from other districts.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter. I trust you will make a decision that prioritizes the best interests of our local community and educational system.

Sincerely,
Jenna MacPhie
Scarborough, Maine