

Regional School Unit 57

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RSU 57 prepares students for success in an ever-changing world.

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Members of the
Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
Maine State Legislature
115 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0115

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am superintendent of schools for RSU #57 which educates students from the towns of Alfred, Limerick, Lyman, Newfield, Shapleigh and Waterboro. I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to L.D. 218, "An Act to Make Student Transfer Agreements Renew Automatically Except in Certain Circumstances," and L.D. 607, "An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units."

I oppose L.D. 218 because it proposes automatic renewal of superintendent agreements for student transfers year over year. This approach fails to provide the flexibility and oversight necessary for managing these agreements effectively. As a result, it risks undermining the ability of school districts to make adjustments based on the changing needs of students and local communities. Additionally, I am aware that another forthcoming bill, on which I have worked alongside my colleagues from across the state, members of the State Board of Education, and representatives from Maine School Management, will provide the necessary clarity around the student transfer agreement process. This bill will address the important aspects of these agreements without the complications of automatic renewal.

I also oppose L.D. 607, which eliminates the appeal provisions for families to the Commissioner of Education and expands school choice. While the bill does include some positive changes, its impact could be far-reaching and ultimately detrimental to public schools statewide. The removal of the appeal process limits the ability of families to challenge transfer decisions, potentially leaving them without recourse if an agreement is not in their best interest. Furthermore, the

Alfred

Limerick

Lyman

Newfield

Shapleigh

Waterboro

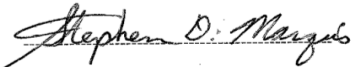
expansion of school choice under this bill would place additional pressure on public schools, exacerbating existing challenges related to funding, resources, and equity.

Importantly, L.D. 607 fails to include the critical language requested by superintendents who have worked collaboratively on a bill aimed at clarifying the responsibilities and processes involved in superintendent agreements. Our proposed bill seeks to ensure clear expectations for sending and receiving superintendents, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education, while safeguarding the integrity of public education.

Given these concerns, I urge the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee to oppose both L.D. 218 and L.D. 607. I believe that alternative legislation currently being developed will better address the needs of our students, families, and schools without the unintended consequences of these two bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen D. Marquis".

Stephen D. Marquis, PhD.
Superintendent of Schools
Maine Regional School Unit 57

Stephen Marquis
Kennebunk
LD 607
File Attached.