

Nicole Chan, Ellsworth Community School District, President
Jon Doty, RSU #34, President-Elect
Jennifer Nickerson, MSAD 22, Treasurer
Joanne Dowd, Kittery School District, Secretary
Debra McIntyre, Executive Director

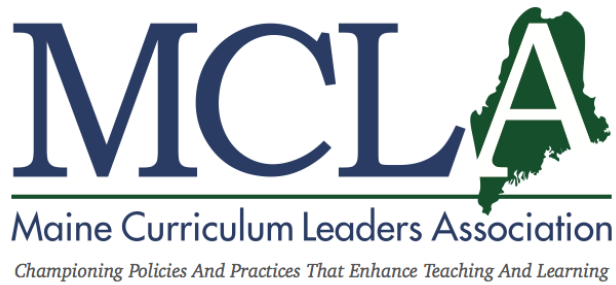
Testimony of Debra McIntyre, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in opposition to LD 660 An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula.

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. On behalf of the members of MCLA, I offer testimony in opposition to LD 660 An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula.

While we deeply value the principles of transparency and public access, we believe this bill does not consider the complexities of the education system in Maine and would, in fact, hinder the creativity and adaptability that are essential to quality education.

First and foremost, Maine's educational system is founded on the principle of local control. Each district is responsible for developing curricula that meet the standards set forth in the Maine Learning Results for all content areas. These standards are comprehensive and aligned with the needs of Maine's diverse student population. Local districts are best positioned to determine how to meet these standards in ways that are relevant to the communities they serve.

This bill, however, places undue restrictions on curriculum development by mandating a level of transparency and access that could compromise educators' ability to respond flexibly to the diverse needs of students. Education is not a one-size-fits-all process. Curricula should be dynamic and responsive to the interests, learning styles, and evolving needs of students. This bill, in its current form, could discourage creativity and the use of innovative, student-centered approaches to learning, as it imposes rigid guidelines on what must be publicly disclosed. The curriculum in Maine is designed to incorporate both foundational content and the flexibility for teachers to bring in recent and relevant information. This ensures that students are exposed to timely and engaging material that reflects the world around them. With the introduction of this bill, there is concern that educators may be forced to limit their instructional choices to only those materials that are strictly defined and disclosed, rather than utilizing emerging and up-to-date resources that enrich the student learning experience.



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In general, we view this bill as restrictive and an unfunded mandate. Local districts already have policies and procedures in place that allow parents the ability to request information regarding curriculum. We believe local control allows school boards and administrators to determine the level of transparency, using processes and tools they have available. We also believe these bills promote a static curriculum rather than a student-centered responsive curriculum. The components in LD 660 addressing curriculum implementation are debilitating to students and to staff. If a teacher is not allowed to implement curriculum based on student need, they are not being responsive to the children in front of them.

We believe that this proposal would create an undue burden to school districts. Currently, districts do not have designated staff members to comply with this proposal. A portal that requires all professional development be posted would be not only a burden to the school district, but also third-party vendors and independent contractors are typically not willing to have a school district post their trainings online. Typically, many school districts already use a curriculum reporting software system or post their curriculum documents online. We believe that local district policy and procedures should determine how to best communicate curriculum to their stakeholders.

For these reasons, MCLA is opposed to LD 660