



Regional School Unit 34

Alton, Bradley, and Old Town

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April 1st, 2025

Re: LD 660 (Against)

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

Thank you for your service to the state of Maine. I write to share my perspective against LD 660, *An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula*. I believe personally and professionally in transparency and public access, and my district puts considerable effort into communicating with our communities via email and physical newsletters, into making our curriculum available online, and into promptly answering questions whether or not they are via a FOAA request.

I encourage you not to support LD 660 for the following reasons:

- There are several areas that are mostly or fully duplicative of existing processes, such as the state's *Data Dashboard* and the FOAA process. Time is the most scarce resource in education, and any staff time diverted toward duplicative processes is time not spent working directly with students, providing small-group interventions and extensions, re-developing curricula to increase relevance and engagement, etc.
- LD 660's requirement that curriculum be "implemented in the classroom without change" would have a chilling and detrimental effect, leading schools/districts to have very static curricula rather than dynamic curricula that is frequently honed by teachers and leaders, and then adapted by skilled teachers to meet the needs and interests of individual students.

In my quarter-century career I've seen many manners of joys, challenges, and tragedies amidst my students and their families. "Teachable moments" such as state, national, or international news can help captivate students' attention as we engage them in the instructional standards and real-world issues. Imagine, for example, instruction in 2004 where skilled teachers could not flexibly incorporate in an age-appropriate way the "teachable moments" of the Mars rover landings, the tragic tsunami, or the joys of the Red Sox World Series run. Imagine if as a teacher I'd been unable to adapt my curriculum and instruction for the student whose bedroom was the living room in a busy house and could not reasonably study at home, or for the student whose family lived in their car for quite some time, or the students who couldn't sleep well at night because of legitimate fear of home invasion, or for the student whose family member was murdered.

Every student deserves to make continuous progress in school.

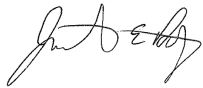
Imagine if as a teacher I hadn't been able to differentiate my 6th grade math curriculum for the student who moved in not being able to add two-digit numbers, and the student in the same class who could already do long division in their head. Imagine a school not being able to respond to data showing that a particular cohort was struggling with connections to peers or with substance abuse.

Education does not occur in a sterile vacuum; real humans educate other real humans.

- As written, LD 660's professional development requirements would also have a chilling effect, leading to less use of peer and teacher leadership through informal PD (at staff meetings for example) and more use of standardized online training programs (that vendors would have to make freely available to the public, likely significantly raising costs). Responsiveness to local needs would suffer.

I believe in the principles of transparency and public access, but most districts already well-address these principles at the local level and through existing processes. I encourage you not to advance LD 660.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Doty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jon" being more prominent than the last name "Doty".

Jon Doty

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