

April 3, 2025

Representative Murphy, Senator Rotundo, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

On behalf of the Institute for Educational Leadership (home of the Coalition for Community Schools), I submit this letter of support for *HP 867, LD 1332, An Act to Establish the Community Schools Success Fund to Ensure the Implementation and Success of Community Schools Programs*.

The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state, and local partners across education, youth development, health, civic engagement, and other sectors that unite around the vision of schools as centers of communities where everyone belongs and thrives. Since its inception almost 30 years ago, the Coalition for Community Schools has been a leading convenor and voice of the community schools movement.

As the leader of IEL's community schools team, we are excited about Maine's strong interest and leadership in the community school strategy. Our staff has collaborated with Maine community schools advocates and practitioners since 2014, convening key partners to learn about community schools and to support their growth. This bill and funding represent the best opportunity to deepen that progress, expanding an evidence-based, cost-effective approach to more schools across Maine.

We see a similar demand and interest at the national level. Community schools continue to be both an evidence-based strategy with core research-based elements, as well as a hyper-local strategy that is customized to each unique school community. Through collaborative leadership, community schools unite students, families, school staff, and the broader community for student success.

I urge you to pass this legislation and provide funding so that more Maine students and families can benefit from this effective strategy.

Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Sincerely,



S. Kwesi Rollins, MSW
Chief Program Officer
Institute for Educational Leadership