

# MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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**TO:** Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
**FROM:** Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee  
**RE:** Neither For Nor Against LD 577: An Act to Address Student Hunger and Nutrition Through Expanded Access to Free Milk in Schools  
**DATE:** April 10, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is neither for nor against LD 577. While we fully support the principle that all students should have access to free milk, regardless of whether they purchase a school lunch or bring one from home, we have concerns about the implementation and funding of this initiative.

Currently, 100% of Maine students have access to free school meals, including milk. However, students who bring lunch from home must pay for milk separately. This creates an inconsistency in access to nutrition that should be addressed to ensure that every child has the same opportunity for a healthy meal.

Our concern lies in the funding mechanism for this proposal. Since this initiative would be grant-based, not all schools would have equal access to funding. Some districts, particularly those with fewer administrative resources, may lack dedicated grant writers or the ability to fulfill the requirements necessary to secure and sustain grant funding. This risks further widening the gap between well-resourced schools and those with fewer financial and logistical capabilities.

We encourage a solution that ensures equitable access to free milk for all students statewide, without placing additional burdens on individual districts to navigate complex grant application processes. A more stable and universally accessible funding mechanism should be explored to prevent unintended inequities.