

Testimony of the Maine Council for English Language Arts

In Opposition to LD 660 – An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula



Submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
April 17, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

My name is Patti Forster, and I am the President of the Maine Council for English Language Arts (MCELA), a professional organization dedicated to advancing literacy and English language arts education across our state. I submit this testimony on behalf of our organization in respectful opposition to LD 660, “An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula.”

As a professional organization of English language arts educators committed to literacy, equity, and excellence in education across Maine, we believe in the value of transparency, accountability, and family engagement. However, this bill—while seemingly aligned with those values—presents significant concerns that would undermine the very foundations of responsive, student-centered instruction.

At its core, LD 660 imposes overly rigid requirements that threaten to restrict teacher autonomy, discourage curricular innovation, and reduce our ability to meet the diverse needs of Maine students. Specifically:

- **Requiring that approved curriculum be implemented “without change” limits professional judgment.** Great teaching depends on flexibility—adapting lessons to students’ needs, current events, and authentic questions that arise in the classroom. This bill’s mandate would discourage real-time responsiveness and stifle the dynamic nature of high-quality instruction.
- **Mandating extensive data collection and a centralized online portal raises serious concerns about student privacy and local control.** Requiring schools to create a single-access point for third-party contractors to view student information and classroom content poses risks that far outweigh any potential benefit. The bill lacks clear guardrails for data protection and blurs the line between appropriate oversight and harmful surveillance.
- **Placing restrictions on curriculum offerings and professional development undermines the expertise of educators and local school boards.** Professional learning must evolve with research and community needs. Imposing state-level constraints on what programs can be offered or accessed diminishes the professional growth of educators and limits schools’ capacity to tailor instruction to their local contexts.
- **The bill’s sweeping mandates create administrative burdens that will divert attention and resources away from teaching and learning.** Our schools are already navigating staffing shortages, student mental health challenges, and the need for stronger academic recovery post-pandemic. LD 660 would impose costly and unnecessary new obligations at a time when educators need trust and support—not more red tape.

Let us be clear: families have a right to be informed and engaged in their children’s education. That right is already protected by existing federal and state laws. Maine’s public schools work every day to communicate openly, share instructional resources, and build meaningful partnerships with parents and guardians.

LD 660 does not promote true transparency—it undermines it by making classrooms less agile, more constrained, and less welcoming to the authentic, evolving conversations that help students learn and grow.

MCELA urges you to vote **Ought Not to Pass** on LD 660. Instead of restricting teachers, let's focus on supporting them. Instead of building portals, let's build trust. And instead of standardizing every corner of education, let's celebrate the richness and responsiveness of learning in Maine.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to students and educators across our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti Forster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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