

Meggan Dwyer  
Rockport  
LD 1474

I'm a parent in Rockport. I'm writing in strong support of LD 1474 because I've seen firsthand how powerful Wabanaki Studies can be when it is meaningfully included in the curriculum.

My daughter is currently in middle school and has been fortunate to benefit from a few forward-thinking educators who are actively working to strengthen Wabanaki curriculum in her school. Thanks to their efforts, she's learning not just about Wabanaki people in the past, but about Wabanaki communities today—living, thriving, and exercising their rights.

This is a stark contrast to the education I received as a child. I was taught about Native people as though they were part of a distant, vanished past—like an extinct species. We learned about their history, but not about their present, and certainly not about their sovereignty, their cultures today, or their rights. That absence shaped my understanding in damaging ways.

LD 291, passed in 2001, made Wabanaki Studies a required part of Maine's public school education. But more than two decades later, too many schools still haven't implemented this law. LD 1474 is a necessary and long-overdue step to ensure that all Maine students receive the education they are entitled to—and that our schools follow the law.

This bill would solidify the position of a Wabanaki Studies Specialist at the Department of Education, helping to ensure that Wabanaki Studies are not just optional add-ons, but part of the core learning standards and graduation requirements. It also maintains funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors—an essential piece, as Wabanaki voices must lead the development of this curriculum.

Maine is behind other states when it comes to Indigenous education. Montana, Oregon, Minnesota, and others have invested in state-funded teams to support Indigenous curriculum across their schools. We owe it to our students, and to Wabanaki communities, to catch up.

This bill also includes funding that school districts can apply for to support Wabanaki Studies in their classrooms, and directs the State Board of Education to make Wabanaki curriculum part of teacher certification. These are smart, tangible steps that will lead to lasting change.

LD 1474 is about honoring the law, honoring Wabanaki people, and giving all Maine students the accurate and inclusive education they deserve.

Please vote in favor of this bill.