

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 1474: An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools
DATE: April 22, 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 800 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is neither for nor against LD 1474. The Maine Principals' Association agrees that strengthening the teaching of Wabanaki studies in our schools is important and necessary. Understanding and honoring the history, culture, and contributions of the Wabanaki people is essential to a comprehensive education for all Maine students.

However, as with other content-specific legislative proposals, we recommend that any proposed changes to academic standards be referred to the Learning Results Task Force established by the Maine Department of Education. This task force is the appropriate body to review and determine what content changes should be made to the Learning Results. Once those standards are revised, it remains the responsibility of local school boards to decide how that content is implemented and to what extent it is taught, in alignment with Maine's commitment to local control.

We also note a point of confusion in Section 2 of the bill, which removes the term "Wabanaki studies" and replaces it with "Maine African American studies." This change appears inconsistent with the stated intent of the bill and may require clarification.

For these reasons, while we support the spirit of the bill, we remain neutral on LD 1474 and respectfully encourage a broader, more inclusive process for integrating such content into Maine's educational standards.

Please note that this testimony was submitted based off of the original language of the bill and not additional amendments that may be presented.