

MAINE

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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee

**RE: In Support of LD 1248: An Act Regarding Physical Escort and
Restraint and Seclusion of Students in Schools**

DATE: April 23, 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 in support of LD 1248. This bill makes important and necessary clarifications to the existing law around physical escort, restraint, and seclusion of students. Specifically, it removes the language that currently requires the threat of "serious physical injury" before staff may intervene. This is a positive and practical change. It allows school staff to act when there is a risk of physical harm, rather than waiting until a student or others are in immediate, serious danger.

Additionally, the bill simplifies and clarifies the law by removing language related to students coming "voluntarily," which has at times caused confusion. It also explicitly permits less restrictive interventions—such as holding a student's hand, elbow, or shoulder—to encourage movement and help de-escalate situations safely. These kinds of supportive, non-intrusive techniques are essential tools for staff working to keep students and others safe.

Unfortunately, there are times when physical intervention is necessary to prevent harm. This bill recognizes that reality while supporting the use of the least restrictive measures possible.

We urge the committee to support LD 1248 and help provide clear, reasonable guidance to schools on this sensitive and important issue.

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