

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



50 Industrial Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 622-0217

Email: mpa@mpa.cc

Websites:

<https://mpaprof.org>
<https://mpa.cc>

Kimberly Liscomb
Cony Middle/High
School
President

Stephen Bell
Dexter Regional High
School
President-elect

Michael R. Burnham
Executive Director
Interscholastic Division

Holly D. Blair
Executive Director
Professional Division

Michael G. Bisson
Assistant Director

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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee

RE: In Support of LD 1357: An Act to Create Alternative Pathways for Certification or Endorsement of Industrial Arts Teachers

DATE: April 25, 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 1357. Maine is currently facing a significant challenge in maintaining access to industrial arts education. Many educators who have served in these essential roles are retiring, and without a clear and accessible pathway to certify new industrial arts teachers, we risk losing this important educational opportunity in our schools.

At present, there is no viable certification or endorsement pathway in Maine for industrial arts teachers. This lack of a clear route into the profession places the future of these programs in jeopardy. By requiring the State Board of Education to develop an alternative pathway to certification or endorsement as part of its upcoming revisions to Chapter 115, this bill takes a meaningful step toward addressing this issue.

Industrial arts courses provide students with valuable hands-on learning experiences, problem-solving skills, and exposure to career-related competencies. These classes can play an especially important role for students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings but are eager to engage in technical and applied learning. While industrial arts programs differ from Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers, they can serve as a vital bridge for students who may not have access to CTE programs due to space limitations or geographic barriers.

LD 1357 would not only help address a growing gap in the educator workforce but would also preserve and expand opportunities for Maine students at a time when technical skills and real-world learning experiences are more relevant than ever.

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