

# MAINE

## PRINCIPALS'

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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 1495: An Act to Make the Professional Standards Board Responsible for the Educator Certification Process  
**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 of public and private schools in Maine.

The Maine Principals' Association's (MPA) Legislative committee appreciates the intent behind LD 1495 and supports ongoing efforts to improve the educator certification process in Maine.

This bill proposes shifting the responsibility for educator certification from the State Board of Education to the Professional Standards Board. We recognize the logic in this proposed shift. The Professional Standards Board is composed of active educators—professionals who are currently working in schools and who possess firsthand knowledge of what is required to meet today's educational challenges. Their lived experience in classrooms, schools, and districts provides invaluable insight into the certification process and its impact on the profession.

In contrast, the State Board of Education is primarily composed of retired educators and/ or individuals from outside the profession, including members of the business community. While these individuals bring important perspectives, they may not possess the same level of current, practical understanding of evolving certification standards, instructional demands, or educational policy implementation.

It's worth noting that most professional fields entrust certification decisions to active members of the profession. Doctors are certified by medical boards made up of practicing physicians. Lawyers are certified and regulated by legal boards comprised of working legal professionals. We believe education should be no different.

We are also appreciative of the structured timeline for transition laid out in the bill, which aims to ensure a smooth shift in responsibility. However, we urge caution regarding the feasibility of that timeline. Systemic changes of this magnitude require careful planning to preserve consistency, fairness, and operational continuity. A rushed implementation could result in confusion, delays, or unintended consequences that affect both educators and school systems statewide.

While the MPA does not take a formal position for or against LD 1495, we are encouraged by the intent to elevate educator voice in the certification process. We respectfully urge the Committee to carefully evaluate the realism of the proposed timeline, and ensure that any transition is collaborative, deliberate, and thoughtfully executed.

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