

Barbara Baker  
Bradley  
LD 339

I am a teacher and have worked with youth development programs outside of the school day for over twenty years in both Montana and Maine. Good teaching materials and inservice education provides a gold mine for enriching youth education. When enrichment becomes entwined with core subjects throughout the K-12 curriculum it enhances young people's sense of belonging. That sense of belonging is key to behavior, learning and thriving.

Maine is unique among states to have already passed laws that teach Wabanaki Studies in Maine schools, but from my understanding of what I saw in Montana and have seen here in Maine, it is the funding of both curriculum and instruction in the schools as well as teacher preparation in the college and in-service areas that will put these laws in action. A permanent Specialist position in the Department of Education to oversee the development and implementation of the program and payment for contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation across the state is exactly what is needed right now.

The best place to look for "how life should be" is in the Portland School district where dedicated teachers and staff have enacted much of the existing Wabanaki-centered curriculum. Their testimony will provide you with guidance as to the results-based methods that are already in place. I can add my testimony as to the results that young people find when they begin to understand the history of the state includes everyone in the room. We are all in this life together and understanding makes life better.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1474 to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools.