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LD 1474

Although LD 291 has been a legal requirement since 2001, few Maine schools succeed in offering curriculum that meets the mark and teachers struggle to find resources and time to learn how and what they should be teaching in Wabanaki Studies.

By permanently establishing the position of Wabanaki Studies Specialist in the Maine Department of Education, the bill ensures the inclusion of Wabanaki Studies in essential instruction and graduation requirements. Currently, a Wabanaki citizen holds this significant (though not yet permanent) position.

It is important that the Maine Department of Education continue funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors working with the Wabanaki Studies Specialist to create and implement professional development short-term courses for teachers. These courses must be made available to teachers throughout the state. A meaningful first step for Maine will be to create the permanent Wabanaki Studies Specialist position and to ensure proper compensation for Wabanaki advisors working on curriculum and teacher development.

I have personally experienced the positive impact of incorporating Wabanaki studies into the curriculum. Students become aware of important history and steps to equity.