



Good morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Naomi Feiguine, I am a 10th-grade English and Social Studies teacher at Lewiston High School. I am submitting my testimony in strong support of **L.D. 1624**. As the school year draws to a close and we head into summer, summer school is on my mind now more than ever.

I serve a wide range of students at Lewiston High School, many of whom are underserved and economically vulnerable, the exact students who benefit greatly from robust summer school programs. We know that children thrive on structure and routine, which they receive from kindergarten through 12th grade. When that structure disappears during the summer, it can do more harm than good. It's not only the students of Lewiston who need summer school intervention and enrichment programs, but I firmly believe that this bill will enhance student learning, nurture, and support students across the state throughout the summer.

Research shows that students from low-income families are at a significantly higher risk of losing academic ground over the summer compared to their more affluent peers. Summer school helps them maintain what they have learned throughout the year and prepares them for what's to come next. Participation in these programs leads to measurable gains in math and reading, and this support is urgently needed in Maine, where only 26% of fourth graders are currently reading at grade level.

Beyond academic support, summer school programs also provide imperative enrichment activities that low-income students may lack outside of school. Summer programs offer plenty of structured spaces where students can develop their social-emotional skills and build a sense of community, important life skills that these students need and might not receive outside of school.

Students who might have fallen behind during the academic school year might succeed in summer school due to smaller class sizes and specialized instruction. Students deserve safe, nourished, and structured summers that summer school programs can provide. Like our children, summer school should not be an afterthought.

Sincerely,
Naomi Feiguine
10th Grade English and Social Studies Teacher
Lewiston High School