

Written Testimony. **Bill:** LD 1624 – An Act to Provide Funding for Summer School Programming

I currently teach in MSAD #46 at Dexter Regional High School. This is my 43rd year teaching in rural, Central Maine. Over the years, I have seen the academic and social needs of students increase drastically as the socio-economic level of our communities has dropped with the shoe industry leaving Dexter.

Additionally, students needs were growing even before the Covid pandemic, which exponentially increased their social and academic deficits.

Funded summer school programs and meal programs ensure that students receive vital support to stay in school and earn a high-school diploma.

The issues are:

- Lower income students rely on bussing to get to school. They cannot stay after school or come early for extra help from teachers. Summer school provides bussing for these students to get the extra support they need. Many of the students who come to summer school are from the outlying areas of the district.
- These rural students are isolated from others, so they lack socialization with their peers and access to summer food programs without the bussing of summer school programs.
- With standards-based instruction, all essential standards must be met in order to graduate; students need extra support in middle school to be ready for high school and in high school to be able to graduate
- The credit/standards recovery available in summer school is one-on-one or small group, which meets the needs of these academically-challenged students. They often shut down in a regular-sized class. Teachers are able to give the educational support that these students need in summer school.
- Standards-based instruction acknowledges that some students simply need more time with material than others in order to meet the required level of proficiency with a standard. Summer school provides the time with material needed for these students.
- Summer school provides the standards/credit recovery that a large percentage of our students need in order to be successful and graduate from high school. Lack of funding will have a real and long-lasting effect of students who do not earn a high school diploma. The inequity created by lack of funding will create a life-lasting negative impact and continue the cycle of inequity for the families these students create. In turn, the economy of Maine will be impacted by those stuck at this economic level. long lasting

I urge you to sufficiently fund summer school programs in Maine; the impact on our state will be long-lasting.

Teresa Brzustowicz, Teacher

