

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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MPA is an Equal
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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Opposition of LD 1098: An Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full School Day for All Students
DATE: May 1, 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, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee opposes LD 1098 due to significant concerns regarding its implementation and impact on schools. While we recognize and support the goal of ensuring equal instructional time for all students, this bill presents several practical and logistical challenges.

First, we question why this bill has been designated as an emergency measure. Special education students already have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) designed to best meet their unique learning and behavioral needs. It is unclear whether LD 1098 would override IEPs, creating confusion about how schools should navigate legally required individualized accommodations.

Additionally, the bill fails to define what constitutes "extreme" behavior, removing the discretion of school professionals to make informed decisions based on a student's needs and the safety of the school environment. This lack of clarity could lead to inconsistent interpretations and applications across districts.

One of our primary concerns is the lack of resources available to support the full implementation of this bill. Many schools already struggle with staffing, training, and supportive services necessary to meet the needs of students with complex educational and behavioral challenges. Although LD 1098 states that a lack of resources cannot justify an abbreviated school day, it does not address how schools should proceed when such resources are simply unavailable. If parents object to an alternative schedule, who will be responsible for providing the necessary support to ensure students receive the same instructional hours as their peers?

Furthermore, there is contradictory language within the bill. While it outlines conditions under which an abbreviated day may be implemented, it later states that these requirements do not apply when a student has been removed under generally applicable disciplinary procedures. This raises concerns about how the law would be interpreted and applied consistently across schools.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to reconsider LD 1098 and explore alternative solutions that uphold the principle of equitable education while also recognizing the realities of school capacity, staffing, and resources.

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