

MAINE

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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: Neither For Nor Against LD 1639: An Act to Codify
Minimum Instructional Hours in the State's Schools**
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 Maine Principals' Association's Legislative Committee is neither for nor against LD 1639.

We support the concept of establishing a consistent minimum of 900 instructional hours for students, as this reinforces the importance of adequate learning time. However, we note that many of the bill's provisions—such as the ability of the Commissioner of Education to waive instructional hour requirements in emergency situations—are already in practice.

Our concern lies in the potential unintended consequences this legislation could create. Adding additional statutory requirements may result in increased administrative burden on schools and districts, particularly in the form of documentation, reporting, and compliance tracking. This added workload could divert attention and resources from instruction and student support.

Additionally, the proposed legislation could present complications with existing collective bargaining agreements. Local contracts often address school calendars, teacher workdays, and instructional time in ways that may conflict with or be affected by the bill's language.

There are numerous variables—such as regional differences, weather-related disruptions, and school-specific schedules—that could be impacted by a one-size-fits-all approach. For these reasons, while we appreciate the intent, we urge careful consideration of the bill's practical implications before moving forward.

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