

MSAD #51

The Schools of Cumberland and North Yarmouth, Maine

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April 29, 2025

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1098: An Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full School Day for All Students.

For students who may not be able to access a full school day, there are already laws in place that regulate any changes through the Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER). Decisions for an abbreviated day are not made lightly and are made as part of the IEP team, of which parents are part. This bill limits the IEP team's flexibility and ability to make these decisions when it is necessary for the student and their educational needs.

Sometimes an abbreviated day is necessary for a student as a therapeutic support so they can reintegrate at a manageable pace. This may be an option the IEP team discusses to improve attendance, build confidence and help the student manage anxiety. Other times, a shortened day may be the best option while the student is awaiting a placement in a Special Purpose Private School and returning to full school day programming may be unsafe for the student and their peers. Again, I stress that this is a decision that is not made without careful thought and consideration and in the best interest of the student.

When an abbreviated day is put in place, the IEP team meets regularly to discuss re-entry plans and MUSER outlines the timelines that these meetings must take place. The regulations also strictly limit the use of an abbreviated day as a form of discipline.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject this bill.

Best regards,

Carla Fancy

Assistant Director of Instructional Support