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Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology
LD 1764

As Director of the Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology, I am reaching out to you to ask for your support regarding LD1764 (An Act to Ensure Equitable Staffing Ratios Across the State for Career and Technical Education Programs in Areas with Smaller Student Populations)

This legislation would allow Career and Technical schools such as ours, with a catchment area of fewer than 1,000 students to have one full-time employee (instructor) for every 8 students instead of the current 13 to 1 ratio, which is very difficult in the rural areas of Maine.

Our catchment area includes the four high schools in Western Washington County; Washington Academy, with a 9-12 enrollment of 264, Narraguagus High School with a 9-12 enrollment of 194, Machias Memorial High School with a 9-12 enrollment of 173, and Jonesport-Beals High School with a 9-12 enrollment of 59. The total enrollment of our catchment area is 690 students. However, of the 690 students, except in rare situations, we only serve the 11th and 12th graders due to conflicts with graduation requirements for the sending schools. Our high schools are small and flexibility with scheduling is difficult. That is true, even with the 11th and 12th graders, but becomes even more difficult if we include 9th and 10th graders in our CTE programming. Also, Washington Academy, which has the largest enrollment of any of our sending schools, typically has fewer than a dozen students (less than 8%) included in our total enrollment, more than likely due to the fact that WA is a private secondary school. So, the largest school in our catchment area, sends the fewest number of students.

CWCIT has 11 programs. Of the 11, one (Computer Science) was new in 24-25, so received FTE status, but only had 5 students. That figure may not grow a lot beyond that, but is a very valuable educational experience for the students who are taking it. Five of our programs are over the 13 to 1 ratio. One (Childcare) is at 12, but still receiving .5 FTE. All of the other programs, however, are at the 8 to 1 ratio. These enrollments are not likely to grow due to the small enrollment in the catchment area. We are very close to maximum enrollment from the sending schools. The three smallest sending schools send us well over 60% of their 11th and 12th graders and that figure may change from year to year, but is not likely to go consistently more than 3 out of 5 of their 11th and 12th graders.

If the LD 1764 were to pass, Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology, serving well over half of Washington County students, could be funded fully with all 11 of our programs. It could also give us a chance to expand offerings and provide more opportunities for students as well as economic growth in Western Washington County. .