

Lucille Willey, Director of Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology

In support of:

**LD 1764: An Act to Ensure Equitable Staffing Ratios Across the State for Career and Technical Education Programs in Areas with Smaller Student Populations**

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, Narraguagus High School, Machias High School, and Jonesport-Beals High School, with a total enrollment in our catchment area of 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 8% of their students 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, and that is not expected to change.

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 consistently be more than that.

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. .