



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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JANET T. MILLS
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May 6, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Senate Chair
Representative Brennan, House Chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

LD 1764, An Act to Ensure Equitable Staffing Ratios Across the State for Career and Technical Education Programs in Areas with Smaller Student Populations requires a career and technical education (CTE) center or region to maintain a staffing ratio based on the number of students enrolled. It also requires the Maine Department of Education to distribute additional funds to meet the staffing requirements.

The Maine DOE supports the important work of the CTE centers and regions, and we have some concerns with the proposals in this bill. Funding for Career and Technical Education centers and regions is calculated and disbursed based on the funding model as provided in Title 20-A, Chapter 606-B §15688-A. Currently, the State funds 100% of CTE costs as determined by the CTE funding formula, which includes a per-pupil component, direct instruction staff, administration, operations & maintenance, and student and staff support including CTE program transportation. For FY25 and FY26 State CTE funding is \$72.2 and \$76.2 million respectively. This funding is accounted for prior to determining the state and local share through the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding formula. As with all conversations regarding changes to EPS, by providing additional funding to one area, there are other areas in the State that will receive less funding. These decisions must be carefully weighed.

This bill potentially represents a major shift in the calculation of CTE funding. The current formula does not include teacher-to-student ratios matched to CTE population sizes. Instead, the funding calculation includes the same ratios used in regular SAU calculations. Changing the CTE calculation formula to include different student population levels will require new data collection and additional resources to validate the new data and update the CTE calculation methods. Importantly, all CTE enrollments are currently below 1000 students. Including new ratio levels will increase the total CTE cost that the State subsidizes.

The DOE supports and values CTEs as an essential part of our education community. To that end, we are open to discussing the bill and potential alternatives with the sponsor and stakeholders. The Department will be available to provide additional information on LD 1764 and respond to any questions during the upcoming work session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paula Gravelle", written in a cursive style.

Paula Gravelle
Director of School Finance