

# MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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**TO:** Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

**FROM:** Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee

**RE:** In Support of LD 2114: An Act Regarding Public Preschool Programs Serving Children Who Are 3 Years of Age

**DATE:** January 22, 2026

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.

School districts that currently operate public preschool programs serving 3- and 4-year-olds have expressed strong support for this legislation. In conversations with schools that already provide PK for children who are 3 and 3½ years old, feedback has been overwhelmingly favorable. These districts see the value of early access to developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and the long-term benefits for students, families, and schools.

Initial concerns centered on two primary issues, both of which are appropriately addressed in the amendment before you today.

First, districts were concerned that the number of 3-year-olds served could be capped in a way that limited flexibility and responsiveness to local need. The amended language resolves this concern by removing that constraint, allowing districts to serve students based on capacity, community context, and identified need.

Second, there were questions regarding Section 13-D, specifically the inclusion of the phrase “without a disability.” The amendment clarifies this language, ensuring that funding eligibility appropriately includes 3-year-old children without disabilities, while still allowing districts to better target and allocate resources. This clarification was an important fix and provides greater certainty for school systems planning sustainable preschool programs.

While it is not possible to fully anticipate the impact this policy may have on private childcare providers, this bill focuses on ensuring that public schools are able to access funding to serve 3-year-olds without disabilities, strengthening

This funding support will help districts expand access, improve program quality, and stabilize early childhood offerings.

Most importantly, this legislation reinforces the broader goal of meeting student needs earlier in their school career. Providing high-quality early learning experiences can significantly improve readiness for kindergarten, reduce the need for more intensive interventions later, and better position students for long-term success.

In summary, the amended LD 2114 thoughtfully addresses earlier concerns, provides needed financial support to schools, and advances Maine's commitment to early childhood education. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to support the amended bill.