

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
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TO: **Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**

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

RE: **In Support of LD 2172: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 33: Rule Governing Physical Restraint and Seclusion, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education, State Board of Education**

DATE: **2/5/2026**

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.

In April, 2026, the MPA testified in support of LD 1248, which made important and necessary clarifications to existing law governing the physical escort, restraint, and seclusion of students. Notably, LD 1248 removed language requiring the threat of “serious physical injury” before staff may intervene. This was a positive and practical change, allowing school staff to act when there is a risk of physical harm rather than waiting until a student or others are in immediate, serious danger.

LD 1248 also simplified and clarified the law by removing language related to students acting “voluntarily,” which had caused confusion in practice. In addition, it explicitly permits less restrictive interventions—such as holding a student’s hand, elbow, or shoulder—to encourage movement and safely de-escalate situations. These supportive, non-intrusive techniques are essential tools for school staff working to maintain safety.

While physical intervention should always be a last resort, there are situations in which it is necessary to prevent harm. LD 1248 appropriately acknowledged that reality while reinforcing the expectation that the least restrictive measures be used whenever possible.

Although this testimony references LD 1248, we urge the committee to support LD 2172 and to undertake a legislative review of relevant portions of Chapter 33. We are in hopes that by doing so will help ensure schools have clear, reasonable, and practical guidance on this sensitive and important issue.

Please note that this testimony was submitted based on the original version of the legislation.