

20 February 2026

To: Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs

From: Leigh Reagan Alley, Ed.D.

RE: LD 2175 Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115—The Credentialing of Education Personnel, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs:

I am Leigh Reagan Alley, Coordinator of Teacher Education at the University of Maine at Augusta, addressing you today as an individual, on my own behalf, not on behalf of my university or the University of Maine System. My career in education spans 25 years, including service as executive director of Maine's state affiliate of ASCD for nearly a decade. I oppose LD 2175 as written.

My gravest concern is the proposed revision to Chapter 115, which would establish a new portfolio-based "Pathway 3." As a longtime member of teacher-preparation faculty and as a leadership strategist, I understand the critical need for thoughtful innovations that address workforce needs. However, the portfolio pathway, as written, raises serious practical and professional problems that the legislation does not resolve. What constitutes an acceptable portfolio? What evidence would be required? How would reliability and consistency be ensured across raters or reviewers? What safeguards would prevent uneven or arbitrary decisions? In the absence of clear, public criteria and a transparent process, a portfolio system invites uncertainty for candidates and inconsistency for employers and the public. The Committee's responsibility is to ensure that implementation mechanisms are sufficiently defined to protect public interest.

Secondly, portfolio evaluation is a substantial administrative task. It is labor-intensive, specialized work that must be conducted with deep content knowledge and careful calibration across multiple certification areas. Maine's certification system is already experiencing significant capacity and staffing challenges. Creating a new, complex review process without dedicated staffing, training, and quality-control mechanisms is likely to produce delays, uneven outcomes, and additional strain on a system already stretched thin.

Thirdly and problematically, the bill's language would apply the portfolio option to both in-service educators and pre-service applicants alike. Individuals who are already practicing as teachers, administrators, or specialists may have a body of authentic professional evidence to document their work and growth. Pre-service candidates, by definition, have not yet accumulated

the experience that professional portfolios typically draw upon. Altering the mechanisms for demonstrating readiness at initial licensure risks weakening the very foundation that protects students and supports long-term educator success and retention—especially when classrooms are increasingly complex and of heightened need.

Maine already has mechanisms, such as conditional certification pathways, that allow districts to hire individuals who are still progressing toward full credentials. Given those existing options, adding an ill-defined portfolio route to *initial* certification is neither a careful nor necessary supplement; it is a structural change with significant potential consequences for quality, equity, and public trust.

Striking the term ‘pre-service’ from the language, which I urge you to do, would, at least, align initial licensure with the intent of Chapter 114, which establishes initial licensure as the culmination of supervised clinical practice and verified preparation. Extending a portfolio pathway to pre-service candidates creates a poor parallel entry route that bypasses that structure.

Thank you for your fine service to Maine and to its deserving students and schools.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leigh R. Alley".

Leigh Reagan Alley, Ed.D.