

# Kennebec Intra-District Schools (RSU 2)

Dresden – Farmingdale – Hallowell – Monmouth

7 Reed Street, Hallowell, Maine 04347

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February 23, 2026

## **Education and Cultural Affairs Committee**

Maine Legislature  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

### **RE: Testimony in Support of LD 2175 — An Act to Strengthen Educator Certification Pathways**

Dear Chair and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

My name is Rick Amero, and I serve as Superintendent of the Kennebec Intra-District Schools (Regional School Unit 2). I write today in **strong support** of LD 2175, legislation that would modernize Maine's educator certification system and provide school districts with meaningful flexibility to address a growing teacher workforce crisis.

Maine schools are facing serious and well-documented teacher shortages. Across our state, vacancies have been identified in 17 endorsement areas, from elementary education to mathematics and English, and districts like mine are struggling to fill classrooms with qualified educators. LD 2175 offers a thoughtful, locally-grounded solution.

At the heart of LD 2175 is a new "portfolio pathway" that allows districts to build individualized certification plans for two important groups of candidates: career changers entering education from other professional fields, and experienced educators seeking to transition into a new endorsement area. This pathway does not replace traditional college-based teacher preparation as the vast majority of educators will continue through those routes, but it gives districts a critical tool to support strong candidates who might otherwise walk away from teaching altogether.

Rather than requiring duplicative or irrelevant coursework, the portfolio pathway allows districts to recognize prior professional experience and focus training precisely where it is needed, through mentoring, targeted coursework, and classroom support. This is smarter, more efficient, and more respectful of candidates' existing expertise.

LD 2175 is designed with appropriate safeguards. Individualized certification plans are developed by district teams in coordination with higher education partners and must be approved by the State Board of Education. This structure ensures that flexibility does not come at the expense of rigor and districts gain the ability to meet real workforce needs while the state maintains oversight of quality.

The bill also encourages districts to partner with Maine colleges, universities, and regional providers for professional development, rather than relying on expensive out-of-state online courses of uneven quality. This keeps professional development dollars local, saves districts money, and builds stronger connections between K-12 schools and Maine's higher education institutions.

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There is no question that we are experiencing a crisis in regards to the scarcity of qualified educators. As a Maine school administrator for the past 16 years I have experienced firsthand the challenges of being unable to hire qualified applicants from out of state, professionals from other career fields, or even experienced educators who want to change endorsement areas due to certification barriers and unnecessary obstacles. LD 2175 could help fill those positions and improve academic outcomes for students.

The result of this legislation, if passed, would be a smarter investment in people by supporting strong candidates already in our communities and helping districts fill shortages with educators who are well-trained, well-mentored, and more likely to stay. That is a win for our schools, our students, and the communities we serve.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 2175 and provide Maine's school districts the tools we need to serve and support every student to the best of our ability. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

***Richard A. Amero, Jr.***

Richard A. Amero, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Kennebec Intra-District Schools (Regional School Unit 2)