



February 24, 2026

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

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, State Board of Education

Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

My name is Carrie Woodcock, and I serve as the Executive Director of Maine Parent Federation (MPF), Maine's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center and Family-to-Family Health Information Center. As both a parent of two young adults with different abilities and the leader of an organization that supports families statewide, I appreciate the opportunity to provide our written testimony.

MPF submits testimony in opposition of LD 2175 Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115, specifically the consolidation of Special Education certification into a single Pre-K through 12 endorsement.

Under the current rule, Maine maintains age-banded Special Education endorsements that align with child development and instructional needs. The proposed Chapter 115 revisions eliminate these distinctions and replace them with one broad credential.

This change would produce generalists rather than specialists, particularly in early childhood and transition-age services—two areas where Maine already struggles to meet federal expectations. If adopted, the Pre-K–12 certification will:

- Reduce specialized preparation for early childhood and transition-age students
- Create inconsistency in educator training across programs
- Make it harder for districts to hire teachers with the right expertise
- Undermine early identification, early intervention, and post-school outcomes

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Standards (2020) identifies early childhood special education as a distinct discipline requiring specialized preparation for children birth through age 8. These

standards emphasize family-centered practice, developmentally appropriate assessment, and intervention across home, preschool, and early elementary settings.

These competencies are not interchangeable with those required for middle or high school Special Education. A single Pre-K–12 certification cannot guarantee adequate preparation across this full developmental span.

Studies comparing preschool and school-age Special Education consistently highlight major differences in:

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) implementation
- Assessment and curriculum
- Family engagement
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Legal frameworks across IDEA Part C, Part B Section 619, and K–12

These differences require targeted educator preparation, not a consolidated credential.

Maine would become the only New England state without age-banded Special Education credentials. Other states abandoned “all-grades” special education certificates because they were ineffective.

Massachusetts is the clearest example. Prior to 2004, MA had a single K–12 “All Grades” Special Education certificate. The state eliminated it as it did not prepare teachers for the developmental differences between early childhood, elementary, and secondary students. It replaced the all-grades certificate with four grade-banded licenses.

Students with disabilities deserve educators whose preparation matches their developmental needs—not a one-size-fits-all credential. Maine’s proposal would move us in the opposite direction, weakening specialization at a time when students with disabilities need more expertise, not less.

For these reasons, the Maine Parent Federation urges the Committee to reject the consolidation of special education certification into a single Pre-K–12 endorsement and to retain age-banded certifications that align with national standards and best practices.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maine’s children and families.

Respectfully,
Carrie Woodcock
Executive Director

New England States Special Education Certifications

State	Special Education Certification Structure	Notes
Maine (proposed)	Single Pre-K-12 certification	Removes age bands; generalist model.
Massachusetts	Multiple grade-span endorsements (e.g., Moderate Disabilities Pre-K-age 8, Moderate Disabilities 5-12, Severe Disabilities all levels)	Require MTEL exams aligned to developmental levels.
New Hampshire	Maintains distinct Special Education endorsements aligned to grade spans; rules embedded in Ed 1100 standards.	NH's special education rules emphasize developmental appropriateness and age-specific competencies.
Vermont	Special Education endorsement covers K-12, but early childhood Special Education is a separate endorsement (Birth - age 6).	Maintains ECSE as a distinct discipline.
Connecticut	Requires separate endorsements for Special Education (K-12) and Early Childhood Special Education (Birth - K)	ECSE is not covered by the K-12 endorsement.
Rhode Island	Offers Special Education Teacher: Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary endorsements.	Maintains developmental specialization.
Massachusetts	Eliminated its old "all grades" certificate in 2004 because it was too broad; replaced with grade-branded Special Education licenses.	Moderate Disabilities Pre-K-age 8 Moderate Disabilities Grades 5 - 12

