



Regional School Unit 34

Alton, Bradley, and Old Town

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Re: LD 2175 (Chapter 115 revisions)

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the ECA Committee,

Thank you for your service to our state. I write in enthusiastic support of LD 2175 (revisions to Chapter 115). I bring the perspective of 26 years with varied service as a teacher, teacher-leader, member of the certification support system, district administrator, graduate student earning three advanced degrees in education, and advisory committee member for multiple post-secondary education programs. I and my district are deeply engaged in educator development, through our innovative “earn while you learn” *Educator Accelerator* program, through hosting pre-service educators at stages in their development from four local post-secondary institutions, through teaching coursework as adjunct faculty, through engagement with Maine Teacher Residency, and through working with other sites to develop the Maine Teacher Apprenticeship program. All this to say: I care deeply about preparing educators well.

While the new Chapter 115 will positively address other needs, such as the certification necessary to enable the CDS transition, a new sensible option for middle school certification, and a new technology/engineering certificate, I am particularly excited about the new portfolio pathway toward conditional and then full certification. I frequently meet new potential educators and advise them on certification possibilities. Many potential career-changers walk away after that conversation. They are not resistant to learning, but know their needs are different than a novice undergrad, and often don't want to take numerous courses that seem designed for a different stage of life. Most aren't in a position to pause income while they pursue an intensive graduate program in education, so these biologists, anthropologists, wildlife ecologists, journalists, and economists that I meet stay out of professional education. Those who persist in entering the field typically take many courses in their three conditional years, some of which are a good fit for their needs and some of which “check the box” - using scarce time and energy that could be better used in other professional learning. Through the portfolio process, we will be able to use a combination of coursework and high-quality professional learning techniques to meet those professionals where they are and give them what they need to become an effective teacher.

Every student deserves to make continuous progress in school.

Similarly, many times in my career I have guided colleagues through certification journeys when they wish to expand on their endorsement areas. Some of the coursework requirements are often a great fit, but others often are not, and different high-quality professional development such as working with a skilled instructional coach or independent book studies would be a better fit for some of their needs. As an example, when I guide experienced Kindergarten teachers in earning Pre-K endorsement, part of the coursework journey frankly seems silly to each of us involved.

Chapter 115 lays out minimum requirements to serve in educational roles. These are important to maintain a level of preparation necessary to serve our students, but as currently constructed Chapter 115's requirements focus more on the *how* of meeting rigorous standards (credit hours), than on the outcomes themselves. An unintended consequence is that busy professionals often tend to choose online asynchronous out-of-state coursework to "check the box." My district sent \$15K out of state on such courses in one recent fiscal year. Just as we create multiple pathways for students to reach high standards, it is appropriate to create multiple pathways for adults to meet rigorous standards and serve students. These new multiple pathways will enable school districts and Career and Technical Education to draw career-changing adults into our field, and help experienced educators carefully expand into new roles.

I attach to this letter one example of what a portfolio process might look like. My region is engaging in preliminary conversation as to how we may approach this as a regional partnership rather than district-by-district, which would enable us to support each other in maintaining the intended combination of high standards and flexibility. Furthermore, a partnership approach would enable us to address needs such as capacity in small rural districts, when an educator transfers from one district to another, and cooperative professional development.

I greatly appreciate C&HE committee chair Keller's and the entire State Board of Education's diligence in soliciting and genuinely hearing input from a variety of perspectives in the process of developing the new Chapter 115, and I appreciate the sincerity with which you and your fellow legislators take this next step in the process. I encourage you to advance LD 2175.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Doty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Jon Doty

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