

PHILLIP J. POTENZIANO, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



SHAWN L. LAMBERT
Assistant Superintendent

Brunswick School Department

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 5, 2026

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Re: Support for LD 2226 — An Act to Reform Maine's Economically Disadvantaged Student Weight

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

As School Superintendent of Brunswick, I am writing in support of LD 2226, An Act to Amend the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) Maine School Funding Formula. Thoughtful and meaningful updates to the EPS formula are essential to ensuring that Maine's school funding system continues to reflect the real costs of providing high-quality public education to every student, and this legislation provides necessary changes.

LD 2226 takes several important steps toward improving the fairness, accuracy, and sustainability of the current formula. The bill's proposed changes to the transportation cost calculation recognize the increasing and often unpredictable costs associated with safely transporting students, while establishing a reasonable framework tied to recent expenditures and inflation. For many school administrative units, transportation accounts for a significant and growing share of operational costs, and clearer parameters will help districts plan more effectively.

The bill also introduces a variable weight for students identified as economically disadvantaged, based on an index developed by MEPRI, the statewide education policy research institute. This approach acknowledges the reality that poverty has a measurable impact on educational needs and resources. Adjusting the formula to better reflect those needs is a meaningful step toward greater equity for students across Maine and here in Brunswick.

Additionally, the bill modernizes several components of the EPS formula. Replacing the professional development per-pupil allocation with an instructional staff support allocation better aligns funding with the direct supports educators need in today's classrooms. Updating the regional adjustment using a nationwide cost-of-living index and aligning it with the salary matrix will also help ensure that the formula reflects real differences in labor costs across regions.

Importantly, the bill also introduces an income indicator into the calculation of a school administrative unit's local contribution. This adjustment helps ensure that the formula better reflects

a community's ability to contribute to the cost of education, supporting a more balanced partnership between the State and local taxpayers.

The changes proposed in LD 2226 represent a thoughtful effort to review and refine the EPS formula to better reflect the educational, economic, and operational realities facing Maine's schools today. Continued evaluation and improvement of the formula is essential to maintaining a fair and effective system of school funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as you consider this legislation. I appreciate the committee's commitment to transparency and to carefully reviewing proposals that impact Maine's public education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip J. Potenzi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

Superintendent Potenzi