

**Testimony in Support of LD 2226**  
**An Act to Amend the Essential Programs & Services Funding Formula**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**  
**132nd Maine Legislature**

Submitted by:

Mark Deblois, Principal Whitefield Elementary School (RSU #12)

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Mark Deblois and I am the principal of the Whitefield Elementary School in Whitefield, ME, a part of RSU #12 and I am offering written testimony in support for LD 2226.

As an educator with 52 years of experience, 44 in the State of Maine, and 26 of those years as a building principal, I can speak clearly to the struggles of mounting costs for educating children and what I believe to be the failure of the current funding formula to recognize the discrepancy between elevated property values and a community's genuine ability to pay. Over the past several years, Whitefield, along with several other of the RSU #12 towns, have faced a massive increase in the perceived value of property, as part of the current funding formula, with no consideration that income levels and the number of families living close to or below the poverty line has risen. Consequently, our share of the state's level of funding has either remained stable or has decreased, leaving this district to rely on property tax increases to fund a very moderate budget. There is not question that this is an unsustainable process for our town

From my reading of LD 2226, there are new considerations of the ability of a town or district to pay. This means that very poor districts, regardless of inflated property values, will gain a much more equitable distribution of funding than before. From a district that suffers greatly from trying to balance the needs of the children in our schools with our concerns related to the tax burden of our land / home owners, LD 2226 seems like an excellent beginning to build equity in the school funding process.

**Thank you.**

**Mark Deblois**

Mark Deblois  
Newcastle  
LD 2226

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