



Maine School Superintendents Association



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

OFFICERS—2022-23

L.D. 98

AN ACT TO UPDATE THE SPECIAL EDUCATION LAWS

PRESIDENT
ERIC F. WADDELL
KITTERY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
KITTERY, 03904

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, executive director of the Maine School Superintendents Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committee of the Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 98 as written.

PRESIDENT-ELECT
PATRICIA HOPKINS
MSAD #11
GARDINER, 04345

Superintendents understand the First District court decision and the federal standard to provide services for adults with disabilities up to 22 years old. Our concerns are not about providing services to adult students with disabilities. They are about successfully providing services with the appropriate level of funding and the certified staff that is needed to do so in a least restrictive environment.

VICE PRESIDENT
MARIA LIBBY
MSAD 28/FIVE TOWN CSD
CAMDEN, 04843

Funding: The office of Special Services and Inclusive Education will reimburse school districts for extended eligibility students for related costs that are generally covered by MaineCare as MaineCare funding does not extend to adult students up to age 22. There are no funds allocated in the 279's to reimburse the costs to provide services to educate adult students in a least restrictive environment. Superintendents are already reporting that they are not being reimbursed for all costs that are being incurred. If school districts are required to provide educational services for adult students up to 22 years old, then they should be reimbursed for all costs that are associated with doing so.

SECRETARY/TREASURER
DR. ANDREW DOLLOFF
YARMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
YARMOUTH, 04096

Least Restrictive Environment: The language in the bill requires that “the education for adult students must be equitable to that provided to typically developing same age peers....” Meeting this expectation will be nearly impossible as there won't be any other same age peer attending school. Access to other services is not readily available as all services provided to adult students must be done by staff who are certified in providing special education services.

PAST PRESIDENT
JAMES BOOTHBY
RSU #25
BUCKSPORT, 04416

Staffing: Providing services to adult students calls for additional staffing. Currently districts are struggling to provide staffing to the students they already serve. Adding additional students is exasperating this issue. The Maine Association for Community Service Providers is an organization that exists to provide supports and services for adults with disabilities. MEACSP clearly outlines the struggles they face in providing services for adults with disabilities such as long waitlists for basic support services, repeated cuts to reimbursement rates, a lack of providers and high staff turnover and vacancies. L.D. 98 simply shifts these struggles to school districts instead of developing plans to address the challenges. Superintendents encourage you to focus on the recommendations outlined by MEACSP to support the delivery of equitable services to adult students with disabilities.

EILEEN E. KING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Leading for equity, excellence and opportunity for all Maine Students