



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

*Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning*

**Testimony of Debra McIntyre, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in opposition to LD 156 An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8.**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. On behalf of the members of MCLA, I offer testimony in opposition to LD 156 An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8.

It is much appreciated that the intent of this bill is to give value to the role of recess to middle school students. We support the spirit and intention of this bill and understand the many benefits of providing recess as noted by the CDC, such as Increasing students' level of physical activity, improving memory, attention, and concentration and possibly reducing disruptive behaviors in the classroom. However, this is a mandate that MCLA can not support. Local school districts need to be able to develop their own schedules based on their student needs and other factors, such as upholding contractual obligations. By mandating recess for grades 6 - 8, school districts would be required to provide adequate staff to supervise students during recess. With current staff shortages and a variety of contractual obligations this may be impossible for many districts. Most districts already provide alternative opportunities for meeting the goal of increased physical activity through outdoor learning, physical education classes, frequent breaks and extracurricular activities. I believe that there are no other mandates for recess for any grade level. In the 128th Legislative session, there was a similar bill for grades K-5 and resulted in a ONTP vote.

We all agree that there are great benefits to outdoor activities, unstructured and structured time to play, however, this needs to be left to local school districts to decide how best to provide these opportunities for all students. Therefore, we oppose LD 156.

Thank you for your time.