

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Dwight Littlefield, Career and Technical Education Team Coordinator

In Support of: L.D. 436

An Act to Provide Career and Technical Education Students with Credit Toward High School Graduation for Work Completed in Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Woodsome

Co-Sponsored by: Senators Harrington and Rafferty, Representatives Lanigan and Sampson

March 9, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Dwight Littlefield, and I am here today representing the Department of Education speaking in support of LD 436, An Act to Provide Career and Technical Education Students with Credit Toward High School Graduation for Work Completed in Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions which require school administrative units (SAUs) and career and technical education (CTE) centers and regions to propose equivalency agreements that allow a student to gain core credit with approval from the Commissioner of Education. It also amends high school diploma requirements to include credit gained through equivalency.

The Department believes that this bill addresses an important need in the field. Currently CTE schools work with each sending school individually to establish what will be accepted as credit towards graduation. Making sure each sending high school has an equivalency agreement lifts an obstacle to participation in CTE programs for many students. Further, equivalency agreements acknowledge the applied learning of core subjects CTE students engage in daily through their programs. The Department sees this as a strong example of the kind of work the Whole Student Framework supports and encourages.

We would like to suggest two changes that we believe would make this bill stronger. First, the current language in LD 436 requires that the Commissioner must sign off on these agreements. Rather than adding this responsibility to the Department, we request that the Committee consider adding the equivalency agreement as a requirement of the Cooperative Agreement which sending high schools and CTEs are already required to have, and file with the Department, as a requirement of MRS, Title 20-A, Chapter 313 §8404: Center advisory committee, and §8457: Cooperative board authority.

Second, we request that the Committee consider phasing in the equivalency requirement over the next three years. This will allow time for the high schools and CTEs to learn from the successful models and engage in intentional collaboration to develop equitable agreements across the state.

The Department is in support of LD 436, An Act to Provide Career and Technical Education Students with Credit Toward High School Graduation for Work Completed in Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions with our suggested changes and will be available to provide additional information on LD 436 and respond to any questions during the upcoming work session.