



Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities

## **Support of LD 829: An Act to Improve Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Gay Anne McDonald and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC).

On behalf of MADSEC, I am providing testimony in support of LD 829: An Act to Improve Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools. MADSEC acknowledges and appreciates the recognition by Representative Crafts and the co-sponsors of this bill to address the behavioral health needs in Maine schools and supports LD 829 as amended.

Specifically, MADSEC supports the amendment to include both direct and indirect services to students, which aligns with Title 20-A MRSAS4008-A, sub-§2 and proposed Chapter 117 rules, and for striking the requirement for SAUs to employ an educator at each school who has completed a national board-certified assistant behavior analyst training.

MADSEC supports the establishment of a pilot program to further support educators in responding to behavioral health needs of students, however, current language in the bill is unclear as to who this collaboration would be with.

In closing, MADSEC would like the Committee to be mindful that a change in student-to-staff ratios may result in a reduction in state funding to school districts.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

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