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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 343

AN ACT TO INVEST IN AN EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association, in support of L.D. 343.

There is a shortage of education technicians in the state. This bill provides \$200,000 in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 to support the Learning Facilitator Credential Program at Eastern Maine Community College. We know this program works. It has been observed to successfully provide quality training and educational technicians that come out of the program prepared and ready to move into their education support roles.

We believe this funding will make the education technician program more robust and keep the early momentum of this successful program moving forward. It also has been pointed out by our members in Southern Maine that education technician programs are offered at Southern Maine Community College as well. They suggest that it too should be supported since there are shortages of education technicians in various regions across the state.

Right now Eastern Maine Community College and Southern Maine Community College offer programs for education technicians that open up pathways for Education Technician IIIs who ultimately may become fully certified teachers.

MSSA and MSBA support this bill and urge it be approved by the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee with an Ought to Pass vote.