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TO: Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
RE: Testimony in Support of LD 343, *An Act to Invest in an Educational Technician Training Program to Address Shortages in Public Schools*
DATE: April 20, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, please accept this testimony in support of LD 343, *An Act to Invest in an Educational Technician Training Program to Address Shortages in Public Schools* on behalf of the Maine Community College System.

Earlier this fall, we were approached by the Maine Education Association to discuss the successful Learning Facilitator program at EMCC. Throughout the course of that conversation, MEA asked us what we needed to continue and expand the program. We discussed the language changes proposed in LD 1366. Another of the suggestions from the program managers (who you will hear from today) was the ability to offer stipends to the mentor teachers. A third was a smaller amount of additional funding to further the reach of the program and continue to offer it at no cost to the students. Further conversations with Rep. Brennan led to this initiative and we appreciate his support.

More details will be provided by EMCC, however, we want to make it clear from the System standpoint that we firmly believe the teachers who dedicate their time and effort to train our students should be offered a stipend for that work. At this time, only some of the school districts enrolled in our program qualify for stipends. This funding will allow us to provide stipends in all participating school districts.

I urge you to support this bill, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.