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## TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 1527

### AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAM

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, neither for nor against L.D. 1527.

School Boards and superintendents support the concept of this legislation, but are neither for nor against this proposal as we have questions about the amount of the funding and the one-time nature of this effort. It is a terrific boost for this program and the concept of community schools. As there are a number of bills that are seeking significant funding in support of important programs, our only question is can they all be sustained. Both organizations support the concept of this effort and know there are districts already taking advantage of grant funding and the connected services that the community school concept can provide.

The Department of Education confirms there currently are four Community Schools in the DOE grant program, which are allowed under Title 20-A.

Title 20-A, §9923 reads:

#### Designation of community schools

The department is authorized to designate 3 community schools established in accordance with this chapter beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. For the 2020-2021 school year, the department is authorized to designate 5 community schools established in accordance with this chapter. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, the department may biannually designate 10 additional community schools established in accordance with this chapter. The department shall annually inform school administrative units of the application process and deadlines and make that information and appropriate forms available on its publicly accessible website. The commissioner shall provide state funding to the school administrative units in which the designated community schools are located and may employ a state community school coordinator to implement this designation program. [PL 2019, c. 434, §1 (AMD).]

L.D. 1527 reaffirms the opportunity to propose a community school, but goes one step further and designates \$2 million in both years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to incentivize the creation of these schools.

Our concern is a one-time appropriation for funding does not assure on-going and future support for these schools.