

**Testimony of Amanda Clark, MSW, LCSW,
Social Worker at Cape Cod Hill School
In Support of LD 1527**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Amanda Clark and I am a resident of Skowhegan, ME and a mom of two boys, one in Kindergarten and one in 3rd grade. I am also a licensed clinical social worker and I work at Cape Cod Hill School in New Sharon, ME.

Today, I am testifying today in support of LD 1527 "An Act To Promote the Community School Program"

Cape Cod Hill School became a community school this year and I can speak first hand to the impact that this programming has had on our students, their families, staff, and the greater community. Since becoming a community school we have been able to offer a wide range of programs that go beyond traditional academic subjects and focus on social, emotional, and physical well-being. This approach helps to create a nurturing and supportive environment where students can thrive and learn. These programs include partnerships with mental health agencies and providers, social emotional learning presentations and programming, before and after school care, after school programs such as seed club, leadership club, athletics, 4H, dental clinics, nutrition classes, the beginning stages of a food and clothing closet, summer enrichment and much more. A large portion of our students and their families experience socioeconomic challenges and/or lack of resources and because of this it is of utmost importance that their local community school is a hub for their family where they can go knowing that there is help, support and compassion. LD1527 would not only allow us to keep being that community hub but allow us to grow and expand our programming, bring on more staffing to oversee programming, and make sure that Cape Cod Hill school and other community schools continue to serve our most vulnerable population, our kids which without ongoing funding we would not be able to sustain.

In summary, I am here today to speak in favor of LD1527. Community schools and the programs they offer are essential for academic, social, and emotional development of students. They provide a holistic approach to education that addresses the broader needs of students and their families, and create a strong sense of community that fosters collaboration and support among all members of the greater local community. Community schools are an excellent investment in the future of our society, and they should be supported and encouraged in every way possible.

Thank you for your time and dedication to our children,

Amanda Clark

Skowhegan