

State of Maine  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Beth Lambert, Director of Teaching and Learning, Department of Education

Neither For Nor Against: L.D. 1510

An Act to Provide Grants to Promote Innovative Learning Strategies

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Brennan

Co-Sponsored by: Senators Ingwersen, Pierce, Rafferty, and Representatives Dodge, Gattine, Malon, Perry, Sargent and Shagoury

Date: May 2, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Beth Lambert and I am here today representing the Department speaking neither for nor against of L.D. 1510, An Act to Provide Grants to Promote Innovative Learning Strategies. This bill proposes to create a fund that would award grants to school administrative units (SAUs) to promote innovative learning programs that are designed to address student achievement gaps.

It is essential that educators stay up-to date with the latest research, best practices, and training to implement innovative instruction effectively. These innovations in education often involve using new and cutting-edge technologies, tools, and materials that may not be readily available within the existing budget of the school district. This grant funding can support professional development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and training, which allow educators to enhance their knowledge and skills in planning innovative instruction, as well as provide educators with the necessary financial resources to acquire these materials, which are crucial for implementing innovative instructional strategies.

Additionally, innovative instruction requires collaboration and networking with experts, peers, and other stakeholders. This grant funding can support educators in building networks, establishing partnerships, and collaborating with other educators. This grant funding will allow districts to hire substitutes so that educators can have the necessary time to exchange ideas, share resources and learn from each other's experience, which can greatly enhance the quality of innovative instructional planning.

A dedicated fund to provide grants to SAUs will help our schools address achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students, racial, and ethnic populations, and students who experienced educational disruption as a result of COVID-19.

The Department of Education is neither for nor against L.D. 1510, An Act to Provide Grants to Promote Innovative Learning Strategies. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.