

Maine Education Association

Jesse Hargrove President Beth French Vice President Jaye Rich Treasurer Rebecca Cole NEA Director Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

Testimony

In Support Of

LD 501: An Act to Fairly fund School Administrative Units for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Jan Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

February 26, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and other esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators, including teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, as well as full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems. Thousands of retired educators continue their connection and advocacy work through the MEA-Retired program.

I offer this testimony today on behalf of the MEA in SUPPORT of LD 501, An Act to Fairly Fund School Administrative Units for Economically Disadvantaged Students.

Last session, the Maine Department of Education produced a chart as a presentation for this Committee that I continue to find extremely useful, and I have included it with my testimony today. The chart listed nearly all the SAUs in the state and ranked them by quintile depending upon how much state aid they receive. The quintile on the left included all the schools that typically get 0-20% of their funding from the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) school funding formula. Those on the right rely on state aid for 80% or more of their funding. The chart listed the percentage above the Essential Programs and Services (ESP) amount they were spending.

We like to say that we want every student in Maine to have access to a top-notch public education regardless of zip code, but this chart shows we are not living up to that mantra. It shows that zip codes matter. It shows the huge inequities in school funding throughout our state. With these funding inequities come inequities of opportunity for students in our state. This chart makes the case for this bill and clearly highlights why sending more state aid to students with high concentrations of disadvantaged students is critical.

As you heard representatives from the Department of Education describe on Monday, EPS is an <u>adequacy</u> model of public education. I refer to EPS as the "Chevette" model of public education – not a "Cadillac." It is designed to provide schools with the resources they need meet the state's



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Learning Results with a mix of state aid and local property taxes.

The funding formula recognizes the local ability to pay based on property values. Coastal towns, resort areas and our state's most affluent communities receive less state aid, and towns with low property values receive more. And it should come as no surprise that many of the same towns with low property values also have high concentrations of disadvantaged students. I hope we can all agree that disadvantaged students often need more resources to achieve the same outcomes as their more affluent peers.

But the chart before you shows the towns with higher property values and in most cases more local wealth are able to spend well above the EPS level. I will not call out any specific towns or districts by name, and certainly in some cases the percentages may be impacted by specific local factors, but as you can see on the left hand side of the chart, towns receiving the least amount of state aid are spending well above what the state deems the minimum standard. However, on the right side of the bar chart, you see the towns/districts getting the highest amount of state aid are often barely able to find the local resources to pay the minimum. This is inequity – pure and simple. The more affluent parts of Maine are making good choices and finding the local money to provide more and better educational opportunities to their students, while the towns struggling with low property values and more disadvantaged students are struggling to pay for the Chevette.

This bill will not end this inequity. But we believe doubling the disadvantaged multiplier will bring some much needed leveling to the funding formula. It will raise the cost of education, but in a targeted manner that provides funding to the communities and schools that need it the most.

There is no immediate solution to eradication the school funding inequities across our state. We certainly would not support efforts to stifle those towns who are raising above and building strong community support for their schools through their taxpayers. But we also know we can and must do more to make sure the towns with the most struggle in our state are getting the help they need.

Thank you for your attention and your service to the people of Maine. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

FY 2022-2023 EPS Allocation Distributions by SAU



Starts and

BAU (Bokky Causta)
2.4 Mathematical Causta

BAU (Sele) Causta)
PF

Arten (337)
64%

Bar (Sele) Causta
7%

Ca



er 🛛	Medium Low Rece	iver	Medium Reciever		Medium High Receiver		High Receiver	
			ा Average Local Required % Medium Receiver = 40-55% State % over		Average Over EPS %			
% over							High Receiver = 60+% State Share	
EPS	SAU (Subsidy Counts)	EPS	SAU (Subsidy Courts)	EPS	SAU (Subsidy Counts)	EPS	SAU (Subsidy Counts)	% over EPS
				32%		62%	Calars (431)	0%
37%	Andover (74)	31%	Airline CSD (61)		Appleton (120)	21%	Caswet (67)	14%
54%	Brighton Pit (7)	8%	Alexander (55)	43%	Atnens (145)	6%	Greenbush (233)	18%
66%	Cranberry laks (18)	120%	Augusta (2.091)	3%	Aubum (3,254)			20%
108%	Decham (250)	37%	Biddeford (2,333)	7%	Banng Pit. (23)	0%	L mestone (201)	0%
7446	Dennistown Fill (11)	0%	Bridgewater (43)	1%	Brewer (1,311)	13%	RSU 28/MSAD 29 (1,269)	22%
38%	Eagle Lake (73)	13%	Brunswick (2.363)	38%	Charlotto (39)	29%	RSU 32/MSAD 32 (209)	
54 %	Eastport (101)	44%	Burington (55)	29%	Dennysville (35)	18%	RSU 39 (087)	6%
24%	Edgecomb (161)	26%	Cherryfield (130)	6656	East Machias (225)	25%	RSU 41/MSAD 41 (542)	13%
24%	Falmouth (1,998)	48%	Cutler (85)	39%	East Millinocket (192)	42%	RSU 45/MSAD 45 (295)	13%
34%	Fayette (159)	48%	Damariscotta (84)	8%	Gienburn (575)	16%	RSU 88/MSAD 24 (253)	0%
64%	Frenanciare (2)	237%	Dayton (322)	29%	Harmony (85)	14%	Below Did Not Submit Bu	idget Data:
57%	Gilead (22)	26%	Drew Pit (3)	0%	Hermon (1,075)	10%	Indian Island (128)	
65%	Great Soll Bay CSD (378)	21%	Elsworth (1,086)	20%	Lewiston (5,168)	5%	'ndian Tewnship (170)	
78%	Hancock (306)	27%	Jefferson (311)	31%	Lisbon (1,241)	19%	Pleasant Pcint (188)	
0%	Highland Pit (2)	20%	Jonesboro (70)	36%	Macrias (299)	18%		
91%	Jonesport (111)	73%	Madawaska (360)	27%	Marshfield (83)	36%		
27%	MSAD 10 (20)	0%	Moosabec CSD	48%	Medway (132)	45%		
29%	Newcaste (105)	36%	Orrington (689)	17%	Millord (369)	655		
3%	Portage Lake (28)	34%	Pembroke (86)	50%	Maknocket (423)	31%		
143%	Pontand (6,430)	29%	Petry (100)	26%	MSAD 27 (704)	16%		
38%	RSU 05 (1 990)	54%	RSU 01 - LKRSU (1,534)	20%	MSAD 46 (612)	355		
64%		48%	RSU 06/MSAD 06 (3 313)	25%	New Swaden (64)	0%		
	RSU 13 (1.506)	54%		29%	Ponceton (132)	23%		
56%	RSU 23 (616)	90%	RSU 14 (3,138)	17%	Robbinston (60)	15%		
46%	Shirley (27)		RSU 16/VSAD 15 (1,772)	13%	RSU 02 (1,857)	35%		
65%	South Portand (2,687)	28%	RSU 17/VSAD 17 (3,219)	26%	RSU 03///SAD 03 (1.041)	20%		
9%	Tremont (117)	102%	RSU 18 (2,774)	32%		22%		
436%	Treation (211)	63%	RSU 20 (437)		RSU 04 (1,345)	12%		
133%	Winterville Pit (24)	0%	RSU 24 (857)	32%	RSU (9 (2.225)			
45%	Wiscasset (379)	49%	RSU 26 (1,046)	13%	RSU 10 (1,792)	24% 17%		
0%	Yarmouth (1,592)	49%	RSU 31/MSAD 31 (363)	37%	RSU 11/VSAD 11 (1,919)			
37%	Belaw Did Not Submit Bud	got Data:	RSU 35/MSAD 35 (1,987)	26%	RSU 16 (1.703)	15%		
35%	East Rango CSD (14)		RSU 37/MSAD 37 (606)	19%	RSU 19 (1,886)	16%		
47%			RSU 38 (1.104)	40%	RSU 26 (654)	40%		
36%			RSU 51/MSAD 51 (2,095)	53%	RSU 30/MSAD 30 (207)	22%		
31%			RSU 55/MSAD 65 (986)	15%	R5U 33/MSAD 33 (212)	0%		
0%			RSU 57/MSAD 57 (2.695)	23%	RSU 34 (1,257)	14%		
3%			RSU 60/MSAD 60 (2,973)	18%	RSU 42/MSAD 42 (313)	25%		
634%			RSU 63/MSAD 53 (720)	19%	RSU 49/MSAD 49 (1,900)	13%		
9 7 %			RSU 71 (1,362)	26%	RSU 60 (338)	29%		
104%			R\$U 72/MSAD 72 (1,128)	17%	RSU 52/MSAD 52 (1,921)	21%		
90%			RSU 74///SAD 74 (550)	27%	RSU 53/MSAD 53 (840)	27%		
0%			RSU 75/M8AD 75 (2,410)	28%	RSU 54/MSAD 54 (2,205)	7%		
38%			RSU 80/MSAD 04 (606)	14%	RSU 66 (734)	22%		
31%			RSU 83/MSAD 13 (152)	61%	RSU 58/MSAD 58 (478)	30%		
55%			Saco (2,688)	30%	RSU 59/MSAD 59 (569)	34%		
45%			Telmadge (8)	0%	RSU 64/MSAD 64 (1,035)	11%		
57%			Veaze (236)	52%	RSU 67 (847)	28%		
6%			Wate (10)	0%	RSU 66/MSAD 66 (909)	7%		
13%			Wathrop	25%	RSU 70/MSAD 70 (441)	11%		
230%			Below Did Not Submit Bu		RSU 73 (1,374)	21%		
92%			Bangor (3.367)		RSU 79/MSAD 01 (1.075)	14%		
36%			Grand isle (34)		RSU 86/MSAD 20 (467)	17%		
53%			Hope (153)		RSU 87/MSAD 23 (839)	20%		
54%			RSJ 12 (1,490)		RSU 89 (253)	19%		
26%			RSU 40/MSAD 40 (1,779)		Sanford (3,062)	6%		
1515			RSU 82/MSAD 12 (104)		Vassalboro (593)	18%		
			RSU 84/MSAD 12 (104)		Waterville (1,505)	18%		
76%					Whitneyville (33)	155		
36%			Westbrook (2,359)		Winslow (1,052)	315		
56%					Woocland (163)	13%		
35%					Below D/d Not Submit Bu			
46%					Gorham (2,751)	wyer wete:		
6%					Madford (43)			
47%								
76%					RSU 22 (2 185)			
93%								

Note: SAUs in RED have received a "Minimum Receiver Adjustment" per the EPS formula

FY 2022-2023 EPS Allocation Distributions by SAU



Low Receiver = 0-19% State Share Contribution Medium Low Receiver = 20-39% State Share Contribution Medium Receiver = 40-59% State Share Contribution Medium High Receiver = 60-79% State Share Contribution High Receiver = 80+% State Share Contribution