



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN  
COMMISSIONER

March 12, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Senate Chair  
Representative Murphy, House Chair  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

LD 512, An Act to Provide Educational Opportunities for Students in Secondary Schools with 200 or Fewer Students would provide rural students with school choice at the secondary level if their residential school administrative unit (SAU) has total resident student count of 200 or fewer. Title 20-A provides the opportunity and eligibility provisions for secondary students to attend a school in another unit, including units that have a small resident student count. Existing statute caps this eligibility at 10 or fewer students. This bill would establish a new section of statute to provide this opportunity in cases where there are 200 or fewer students.

The Maine DOE has heard how important place-based learning is, and these rural communities frequently report that these schools are vital to the students and the learning they receive there, for community identity, and for social cohesion.

The Maine DOE has identified 53 schools that each enroll fewer than 200 students. While LD 512 assumes that this will only affect secondary enrollment, Maine schools are not as easily categorized. Of the 53 schools that the Maine DOE has identified, 17 of them are exclusively 9-12 secondary schools. The remainder are organized in a combination of grades PreK or Kindergarten through 12, grades 7 through 12, and grades 6 through 12. Three of these schools are charter schools. These schools collectively enroll over 3,500 students.

Maine families with concerns about their children's best interest at a small school may take advantage of existing student transfer options (also known as superintendents' agreements) outlined in Title 20-A §5205.

The Department can be available for work sessions on LD 512, An Act to Provide Educational Opportunities for Students in Secondary Schools with 200 or Fewer Students.

Sincerely,  
  
Laura Cyr  
Federal and State Legislative Specialist