

**Testimony for
LD 165
“An Act to Modify Discipline Policies in Maine’s Public Schools”
March 13, 2025**

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

From: Scott K. Porter, Superintendent of Schools, AOS 96 (11 Towns in the Machias Area)

LD 165: An Act to Modify Discipline Policies in Maine’s Public Schools”

I have received numerous complaints from parents and staff members since the expulsion/suspension law was changed for students 5th grade and under. There was a time that most of the difficult disciplinary cases involved issues with high school students. For the past several years most of the difficult disciplinary problems involve students Prek to Grade 2. There are times when whole rooms of students are removed from their classroom while a student acts out. Many parents are frustrated because situations like this cause their children to be fearful and productive student learning time is lost.

Many teachers and ed techs have endured student behaviors that have caused physical pain and serious injuries. The current expulsion/suspension law limits disciplinary measures that building administrators can take to protect staff and students. Prior to this law change, administrators were able to suspend all students up to 10 days. There are many times when a 3 day suspension is not a sufficient punishment for the behavior a student prek – grade 5 student has exhibited. Staff members deserve to be protected and students deserve the right to come to school without fearing what an “out-of-control” student is going to do that could hurt them.

It is my hope that this Committee will support LD 165.

Thank you.