



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### Testimony Presenting LD 660:

“An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula”

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

My name is Elizabeth Caruso. I live in Caratunk, and I represent the people of House District 72. I am honored to present to you LD 660, “An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula.”

According to the US Department of Education, “the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that local education agencies (LEAs), in consultation with parents, develop [the following] local policies concerning student privacy, parents access to information, and administration of certain physical examinations to minors.”

LD 660 aligns with the PPRA and focuses on strengthening trust between schools and the families they serve while ensuring that our public education system remains transparent, accountable, and consistent with the values of local communities across Maine.

Like many of you, I have watched as parents across Maine—and the country—have become more engaged in their children’s education over the past few years. Whether through school board meetings, curriculum reviews, or simply helping with homework during the pandemic, more and more families have begun asking an important question: “*What exactly is being taught in our schools, and how do we ensure accountability in that process?*”

LD 660 responds to that question with a clear, thoughtful framework. It seeks to make our education system more transparent and accessible to the public by:

- Requiring that approved curricula are actually implemented in the classroom as adopted, without unapproved or hidden alterations;
- Ensuring that three years of student enrollment and academic proficiency data are posted online and available to the public, broken down by grade and subject;
- Requiring professional development programs funded with state dollars to be listed, recorded, and made publicly available—including who attended and how much was spent; and

- Creating a centralized online portal where parents, educators, and authorized third parties can easily find curriculum content, training materials, guest speaker information, and more.

I want to be very clear: this bill is not about restricting what can be taught. Rather, it's about ensuring that what has been approved through proper channels is faithfully delivered. It's about empowering parents—not by removing choices, but by giving them access to the information they need to be full partners in their child's education.

During the pandemic, many parents saw firsthand what their children were learning and how. Some were encouraged; others had questions and concerns. But nearly all agreed on one thing: they wanted **more visibility, more communication, and more trust** from the institutions educating their children.

Recent nationwide polls found that between 84-86% of parents support policymakers requiring schools to increase their data transparency.<sup>12</sup> Parents want to be able to see what their children are being taught, and allowing public transparency in education is in many ways the essence of our constitutional republic.

USDOE requires LEAs to develop local policies governing student privacy and parental information access, including **“The right of a parent or student to inspect, upon the request of the parent, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student.”** LD 660 simply makes this information available before the parents request it, thereby proving transparency and integrity and alleviating future burdens to provide data requests.

As a Legislature, we routinely ask for transparency from every other area of public policy—budgets, contracts, health data, even campaign finance. Why should education be any different, and why should the request of the parents of our students be honored less?

This bill does not place unreasonable burdens on teachers. It does not second-guess their expertise. It simply asks that the policies and practices our communities approve be **accessible and accountable to the public**.

According to the Maine School Boards Association 2023 testimony for LD 1129, “school library books and materials are already available through district websites”, and therefore, this information (or links to it) could be easily added to the school district website. Similarly, MSBA stated that “data from state-based assessments are available on the data website for each school district as required by ESSA”, and therefore, the local district would simply need to add the data (or a link) on their website for easy public access. According to the Maine Principals Association from their 2023 testimony, districts already post their curriculum on the district website, so again, LD 660 MSRA 4710D section 4 would not be an undue hardship.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nationalparentsunion.org/2025/01/07/welcome-to-the-era-of-parents-in-the-drivers-seat-parents-want-an-education-system-with-more-options-and-flexibility-new-national-survey-finds/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/poll-84-of-americans-support-parents-right-to-see-what-kids-are-learning/>



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Regarding 4710-D Sect. 5 **Professional development and instructional programs** ... The scope of "Instructional materials," according to DOE interpretation, include not only textbooks but also teacher's manuals, supplementary materials, films, tapes, digital resources, or any other instructional content directly used as part of classroom teaching. However, this right to inspection doesn't mean that schools must disclose every minor classroom interaction or conversation—it specifically pertains to the actual educational content and instructional materials used to educate students.

The essence of LD 660 is that parents should not have to file public records requests to understand what their children are being taught or how their local district is spending state funds. Furthermore, the Maine Right to Know Commission has stated they are overrun with requests; therefore, making the information transparently published would lessen the volume of requests.

Parents should not have to wonder whether their child's classroom reflects the curriculum their school board voted on. And they should not be left out of the conversation when decisions are made about professional development or classroom speakers.

LD 660 gives parents a window—not a veto, but a view- into the classroom. Transparency never undermines professionals or those who are following policies.

Making curricula and assessments available gives communities the tools to understand what's working and where improvements can/should be made. It also gives taxpayers a view of the fruit of their funding and their votes. I urge the committee to support LD 660 and to join me in **reaffirming the importance of transparency, accountability, and partnership in our public education system.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill, and I respectfully urge the committee's support. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

Rep. Elizabeth M. Caruso  
House District 72