



**University of Maine System Testimony
Regarding LD 1327, *An Act to Improve and Expand Student Teaching Opportunities in
Maine by Compensating Student Teaching* — Presented by UMS Chief External &
Governmental Affairs Officer Samantha Warren — April 25, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs: My name is Sam Warren and I am the Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer for the University of Maine System (UMS).

Our System is the state's largest producer of classroom-ready teachers, having awarded nearly 4,300 education degrees or certificates in the past five years. We are proud that since 2015, eight of Maine's top teachers have been our alumni, including the current Maine Teacher of the Year, Becky Hollowell, a graduate of both the University of Maine at Farmington and the University of Southern Maine (USM).

In recognition of the needs of our students and the state's schools, UMS universities work together and with the field to ensure the accessibility of multiple pathways to rigorous educator preparation and the Maine teacher workforce. Our region-leading affordability is essential to aspiring educators pursuing the four-year degree required for traditional teacher certification in the state. More than half of all UMS students qualify for need-based federal Pell, and the percentage is generally higher among those enrolled in our educator preparation programs. For example, the College of Education and Human Development at the R1, D1 University of Maine has more Pell-eligible and first-generation students than any other college at the flagship.

Central to our teacher preparation programs is field-based work in a wide range of settings, which complements academic coursework. This includes, but is not limited to, at least one semester of student teaching required of UMS undergraduate education majors as a capstone experience during their final year of study. Many of our pre-service teachers find this to be the most impactful component of their education and training. While directly supported by both their UMS university faculty and a mentor-teacher in the field, they are finally able to put into professional practice all that they have learned in our classrooms.

As meaningful as student teaching can be, our System recognizes that this requirement to undertake full-time work without pay can be a barrier, especially for those who have other important commitments, including jobs and care for loved ones. We know that some Mainers pursue alternative pathways to certification because they simply cannot afford to student teach. Some settle for conditional or emergency certification as a faster and cheaper route to the classroom, only to find out that they are underprepared for the demands of the role. Without adequate support, this often leads to turnover, exacerbating our schools' staffing shortages, especially in high-poverty districts.

Our own "grow your own" statewide teacher residency program, led by USM and funded initially by Congressionally Directed Spending secured by U.S. Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King, and in 2025-26 with State appropriation requested by Sen. Teresa Pierce, is one such alternative pathway. The program matches participants to paid opportunities as educational technicians,

conditionally or emergency certified teachers, or co-teachers in Maine schools, and also provides them with advising, mentoring, and stipends for tuition at UMS universities and private colleges. As you heard during the hearing on the bill to fund our residency program in future years (LD 696), UMS has helped to place more than 100 new teachers in classrooms across 34 Maine school districts just in the first three years of this research-informed initiative.

However, the residency model and other alternatives like apprenticeship do not accommodate everyone, and UMS is excited about the potential provided by LD 1327 to remove financial barriers for all students. **Our educator preparation program leaders agree wholeheartedly that compensation would broaden access to student teaching and careers as educators for those who do not have the financial means to support themselves during this period of full-time work in the classroom without pay. And it would ensure that student teaching is compensated like many other student work learning experiences and commensurate with the real value these pre-service teachers provide our state's PK-12 schools.**

Our System enrolled 3,854 education majors this academic year (2024-25) and approximately 400 will participate in student teaching experiences. The \$500 weekly stipends proposed by LD 1327 during the typical 15-week student teaching experience would require \$3 million in new State appropriation just for UMS (\$7,500 per student teacher), in addition to approximately \$200,000 in stipends for cooperating teachers and mileage reimbursement.

Our System has some technical concerns about the bill and given that this level of new State appropriation is unlikely in the coming biennium, UMS respectfully proposes that LD 1327 be amended into a study resolve. This would allow for more adequate time to thoughtfully develop a comprehensive student teaching compensation structure that serves student teachers in a manner that can be sustained by the Legislature and is not administratively burdensome to Maine schools or public and private institutions of higher education. If legislative resources are not available to support a study group, UMS would volunteer to consult a wide range of stakeholders, including the Maine Education Association and the Maine School Management Association, and report back our recommendations to this Committee.

In conclusion, UMS believes this is a welcome proposal that warrants serious consideration, which may be best undertaken outside of the legislative process. As a colleague who long led one of our educator preparation programs said, "Compensation for the work done during student teaching would significantly reduce the financial stress felt by student teachers and allow them to focus on the student teaching experience. We believe that mentored and supervised student teaching is critical for success as beginning teachers, and want students to complete their entire degree program rather than opting out of student teaching to take positions under a conditional license. Compensation would demonstrate that student teachers' contributions to the classroom are significant and valued, and would encourage program completion."

Thank you for your support of Maine's public universities and your commitment to strengthening and growing the state's teacher workforce.

University of Maine System

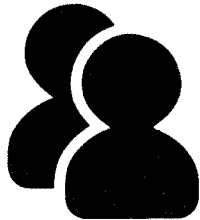
2025 Fast Facts



Maine's
Public
Universities

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM

Student Enrollment



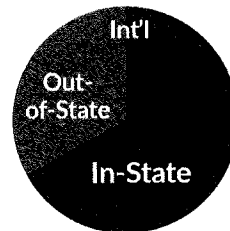
Undergraduate: 20,044

41.6% first-generation college students

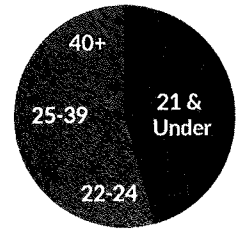
Graduate and law: 5,242

Maine high schoolers earning
free UMS college credit: 5,293

Student Residency



Student Age



University of Maine 10,870

University of Maine at Augusta 3,034

University of Maine at Farmington 1,614

University of Maine at Fort Kent 770

University of Maine at Machias 293

University of Maine at Presque Isle 2,171

University of Southern Maine 6,257

University of Maine School of Law 277

FREE

tuition at all UMS
universities for qualifying
Mainers w/financial need

19,135

UMS students receive
aid they do not need
to pay back

\$9,519

Avg. student aid
package not
counting loans

30%

of Maine undergrad
students pay
NO tuition or fees



29,734 Door-Opening Degrees Conferred (2020-24)

Led by those for business, education, health care and engineering/computing

Alumni earn 2X the state's average median income
and pay 49% more in Maine income taxes

UMaine in nation's
top 3.7% of research
universities (R1),
securing \$225M+



State-funded UMS
R&D has 6:1+ return

"We could not have gotten
this product to market
without their help."



\$624M

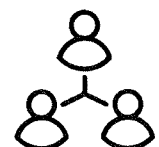
Direct Maine Economic Impact

Annually through
UMS payroll
and purchasing

17,000 hours
of free legal aid
by Maine Law
student attorneys



12,843 dedicated
faculty, staff and
student workers



For more information, please contact UMS Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer Sam Warren (samantha.warren@maine.edu / 207-632-0389)

University of Maine • University of Maine at Augusta • University of Maine at Farmington • University of Maine at Fort Kent
University of Maine at Machias • University of Maine at Presque Isle • University of Southern Maine • University of Maine School of Law