

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 1495

AN ACT TO MAKE THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION PROCESS

April 25, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Steven Bailey, Executive Director of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 1495.

We understand the desires from the proponents of this bill to involve more working educators in the educator certification process. However, we are concerned that this change could have unintended consequences and should not be taken up at this time – especially as the State Board is currently in the midst of considering thoughtful, important changes to the state's certification rules.

Current Maine statute specifically designates the State Board of Education with responsibility for establishing standards for the certification of teachers, among many other duties. The Professional Standards Board, meanwhile, has a purpose to “advise the state board regarding professional growth, certification, endorsement, authorization and governance of the education profession in this State.” They are to perform an advisory role and make recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Unless the State Board of Education is asking for this change of role and function, it is odd that this request for the change is being made. We believe that the State Board is taking a considerate, thoughtful approach in looking at the educator certification process. The board is made up of a mix of educators, administrators, and others with deep knowledge and connections within our field. In recent years, the State Board has worked closely with educators as it considers changes to certification, and has been very open to listening and working together on proposals for different pathways into the profession, different grade ranges, and other potential policies that we believe could have a positive impact on the profession. It is important not to disrupt the apple cart when this process is rounding the corner to really help the process of attracting and securing the services of more educators to the field.

We are not aware of any time during these meetings or full meetings of the State Board of Education has there been an indication or a desire mentioned for certification to be taken on by the Professional Standards Board. As a matter of fact, in my time as Executive Director of Maine School Management and the Maine School Boards Association, I have only heard of the Professional Standards Board mentioned twice – once during an earlier reference in legislation, and one other time when I received a call from the Chair of that Board seeking an opportunity to meet, about two years ago. To have this board go from such a limited role to taking on the

responsibility of educator certification would seem to be a large jump that we worry could interrupt the positive, ongoing process that is currently underway at the State Board level.

The current structure of the Professional Standards Board is made up of mostly teachers and educational technicians. The structure looks to be similar to a district recertification team, and appears to be a board that is requesting to establish the process of certification for their peers. Including more educators in this rulemaking process is a worthwhile idea that could bring forward new and innovative proposals, and may be worth considering at some future point. But now is not the time for this change to be considered. Our associations urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on L.D. 1495.