



YORK ADULT EDUCATION

30 Organug Road, York, ME 03909

April 30, 2025

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

From: Lynn Sheehan, Executive Secretary, York Adult Education

Re: LD 1705 - An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

Good afternoon. First, I'd like to thank Representative SARGENT of York, Senator LIBBY of Cumberland and the others who presented this important legislation.

My name is Lynn Sheehan, and I work at York Adult Education. I teach CLASS: Collaborative Learning and Social Skills for adults with developmental disabilities. I want to start by saying, I'm not a *student* success story. I'm a *teacher* success story. Working in Adult Ed has completely changed my life. It gave me a new sense of purpose, the courage and support to finish my bachelor's degree, a career I love, and a deeper belief that with the right support, anyone can succeed.

At York Adult Ed, we like to say: "We can help with that!" No matter what - if someone needs a diploma, another language, a new skill, or a new start - we find a way, because that's what adult education does. It meets people where they are and lifts them up.

Today, I want to share just a few stories from the students we've had the honor to help:

Talia grew up in York. After a serious illness in her sophomore year, she fell behind in school and struggled to catch up. When she came to York Adult Ed, she finally found the support she needed. She passed all her HiSET exams, enrolled at York County Community College, and with help from Sarah, our College and Career Success Coordinator, is ready to take on the world with confidence and pride.

Jaime moved here from Spain and spent six months trying to land an interview in software engineering. After getting help from our resume specialist, he didn't just get one interview; he got three, and landed his dream job writing code for a video game company.

Cihan, an English Language student, told us: "*I'm really thankful to York Adult Education. I've improved my English, enrolled in college, and even got an internship in my major, computer science.*"

Lily came to us after being bullied and overwhelmed in high school. Through our HiSET program, she found her confidence again, and today, she's thriving at the University of Maine in Orono.

We've seen immigrants like Nina and Ievgenii, who came to Maine as refugees and are now working full-time, building new lives, and improving their English every day.

Camala, from Jamaica, first came to improve her English. She went on to take our CNA course and, with the guidance of our College and Career Success Coordinator, enrolled in nursing school. She also attended our U.S. Citizenship Test Prep class, and has since filed her application and is now waiting for her test date.

And there's Eben, a young man on the autism spectrum who was feeling isolated and alone. He needed a place to socialize, learn, and feel part of something bigger. Through our Collaborative Learning and Social Skills class, he's not only learning new things, he's building friendships, confidence, and even performing on stage at a fundraising event.

What all of these stories have in common, except for the HiSET program, is that they were only possible through grants, fundraising, and donations.

And CLASS, the program I teach, receives no dedicated funding at all. Every activity, every supply, every snack, and every hour we spend together is made possible entirely through donations. We don't want to just keep programs like these going. We want to grow them, so we can say "yes" to more students like Jamie, Lily, Eben, and Cihan.

In York, we were fully funded, every single dollar would go directly to student instruction and support. Not administration. Not overhead. Direct service. Real results. Every dollar makes a difference.

These are just a few of the hundreds of stories that unfold every day in adult education programs across Maine.

When you support full funding for local adult education, you're not just supporting schools, you're supporting futures. You're keeping the door open for second chances, for students of every age, background, and ability. You're saying to every Mainer who needs help: "We can help with that." And we can. But we can only do it with your support. Adult education changed my life, and every day, I see it changing others'. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn E Sheehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn Sheehan
York Adult and Community Education
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