



BANGOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF PUPIL SERVICES

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Testimony in Opposition of LD 1098 An Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full Day for All Students

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Bangor School Department pursuant to LD1098: an Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full Day for All Students.

The Bangor School Department fully support the rights of students with disabilities to access a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER).

As the Director of Pupil Services for the Bangor School Department, I have the direct responsibility of ensuring that all students are receiving a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. At times, an abbreviated school day is necessary for a student. In our district, I attend all meetings for students who require the level of support through an abbreviated day.

Per MUSER, the Individual Education Program team is responsible for determining the appropriate placement, programming, and goals for students. This meeting is focused on the strengths and needs of a student's education, which includes social emotional, mental health, functional and academic skills. The meeting is data driven with a high level of participation with the parents. The team has the responsibility of discussing a change in the length of student's day. The idea of a shortened day for a student, is specific to the individual needs of the student and is not taken lightly. It allows the IEP Team to have the conversation of what the specific needs are for a student.

It is important to note that MUSER already requires the IEP team to address several pieces of a student's education when an abbreviated day is considered. The team has the responsibility of discussing; how the child will meet the system of learning results, receive full access to curriculum, how services on the students IEP will be met, local and statewide testing, and a plan for the student to return to school on a full day. Lastly, MUSER requires the IEP to reconvene every 20 school days to review the progress of the student in returning to a full day of school, unless out on medical, which would be 90 days.

The students in which IEP teams discuss an abbreviated day are fortunate that this discussion is allowed under our current special education law. Students who are struggling with significant depression, anxiety, trauma, medical needs, and/or other needs become successful when programming is designed to meet them where they are at. It allows students to feel success, and utilize the success to increase the students' academic programming. The Bangor School Department receives physician notes, clinician notes, and recommendations from mental health providers noting a slow integration back into a school environment is best for their patient. The Bangor School Department considers these recommendations during the IEP meeting as we value the wrap around supports for families.

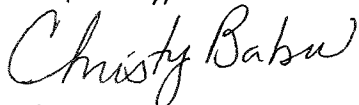
Abbreviated days are rare conversations, but do allow students to have an IEP that supports the student in developing relationships with staff, develop trust, a feeling of accomplished, success, stamina, and the desire to engage more often. Several success stories have been documented over the years of students being able to increase their school day ultimately leading to meeting their goals and returning to a full day of school and graduation for those in high school.

In Maine, we are fortunate that our special education regulations, MUSER, allow for the conversation around an abbreviated day, allowing the IEP team to focus on individual needs, best outcomes for a limited number of students to be successful.

The Bangor School Department strongly recommends the Committee vote 'ought not to pass' on LD1098.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to Maine students. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christy Babin".

Christy Babin
Director of Pupil Services
Bangor School Department

Brownville
 Enfield
 Edinburg
 Howland
 LaGrange
 Maxfield
 Milo
 Passadumkeag
 AOS 47 & CSD 8

Airline
 Amherst
 Aurora
 Dedham
 Great Pond
 Orrington
 Osborn
 Bangor
 Brewer
 Ellsworth
 E. U. T.
 Glenburn
 Greenbush
 Hermon
 Indian Island (MIE)
 Milford

Otis

RSU 19

Corinna
 Dixmont
 Etna
 Hartland
 Newport
 Palmyra
 Plymouth
 St. Albans
 RSU 22

Frankfort
 Hampden
 Newburgh
 Winterport
 RSU 25

Bucksport
 Orland
 Prospect
 Verona Island
 RSU 26

Orono

RSU 34

Alton
 Bradley
 Old Town
 RSU 63

Clifton
 Eddington
 Holden
 RSU/MSAD 64

Bradford
 Corinth
 Hudson
 Kenduskeag
 Stetson
 RSU 67

Chester
 Lincoln
 Mattawamkeag
 RSU 68

Atkinson
 Charleston
 Dover-Foxcroft
 Monson
 Sebec
 RSU 87/MSAD 23

Carmel
 Levant
 Union 76
 Brooklin
 Deer Isle-Stonington
 Sedgwick
 Veazie



Southern Penobscot Regional Program for Children with Exceptionalities

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Christy Babin, Director of Pupil Services • email: cbabin@bangorschools.net

Testimony in Opposition of LD 1098 An Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full Day for All Students

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Sothern Penobscot Regional Program for Children with Exceptionalities pursuant to LD1098: An Act to Ensure Equal Access to a Full Day for All Students.

The member districts of SPRPCE fully support the rights of students with disabilities to access a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER).

SPRPCE offers a regional public day treatment program to the 24 participating districts. This program offers highly structured and specialized programming for students to meet their specific needs based on the Individual Education Plan team meeting and the students individualized plan. An abbreviated school day is an in-depth conversation during the IEP meeting.

Per MUSER, the Individual Education Program team is responsible for determining the appropriate placement, programming, and goals for students. This meeting is focused on the strengths and needs of a student's education, which includes social emotional, mental health, functional and academic skills. The meeting is data driven with a high level of participation with the parents. The team has the responsibility of discussing a change in the length of student's day. The idea of a shortened day for a student, is specific to the individual needs of the student and is not taken lightly. It allows the IEP Team to have the conversation of what the specific needs are for a student.

It is important to note that MUSER already requires the IEP team to address several pieces of a student's education when an abbreviated day is considered. The team has the responsibility of discussing; how the child will meet the system of learning results, receive full access to curriculum, how services on the students IEP will be met, local and statewide testing, and a plan for the student to return to school on a full day. Lastly, MUSER requires the IEP to reconvene every 20 school days to review the progress of the student in returning to a full day of school, unless out on medical, which would be 90 days.

The students in which IEP teams discuss an abbreviated day are fortunate that this discussion is allowed under our current special education law. Students who are struggling with significant depression, anxiety, trauma, medical needs, and/or additional needs become successful when programming is designed to meet them where they are at. It allows students to feel success, and utilize the success to increase the students' academic programming. Abbreviated days are rare conversations, but do allow students to have an IEP that allows the student to develop relationships with staff, develop trust, feel accomplished, successful, stamina, and the desire to engage more. Several success stories have been documented over the years of students being able to increase their school day ultimately leading to meeting their goals and returning to their sending districts with their peers.

We are fortunate that our special education regulations outline the requirements for an abbreviated day allowing the IEP to determine best outcomes for a limited number of students to be successful. On behalf of SPRPCE, we strongly recommend that the Committee vote, 'ought not to pass' on LD1098

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to Maine students. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

Christy Babin
 Leadership Team Representative
 SPRPCE