



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **Barbara Bagshaw**

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Testimony  
In Support of

### **LD 1588 An Act to Ensure Transparency in Student Transfer Requests**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Rep. Barbara Bagshaw. I represent the fine people of House District 106, which includes part of Windham. I'm here today to present my bill, **LD 1588, "An Act to Ensure Transparency in Student Transfer Requests."**

This bill proposes a modest but impactful change for lawmakers, members of this committee, researchers, and the public to better understand the student transfer process in Maine. Maine law requires students to attend school in their local districts. However, our state also allows students to transfer to other schools through what are known as superintendents' agreements. Unfortunately, the state does not track these arrangements, so we don't know how families use the transfer process to find a school that's a better fit for their children.

There are several legitimate reasons families may opt for a transfer through a superintendents' agreement. For example, given Maine's rural character and large school districts, a family may actually reside closer to a school at the child's grade level – one which is technically outside of their district – than the school they're required to attend. In addition, families may opt for transfers due to real or perceived improvements in educational quality, programming that matches the students' career interests, or for improved behavioral or mental health reasons due to issues like bullying.

My bill is simple and straightforward. It would require school administrative units to report to the Commissioner of the Department of Education by July 1 of each year the total number of student transfer requests presented to that school in the last calendar year, with a breakdown of what number represented requests to transfer to, or from, that school district. Districts would also be required to report the number of transfers accepted, the number of transfers denied, and a written description for each denial.

My bill would also require the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education to publish on the Department's data portal the cumulative total of student transfers that were accepted and denied in the previous calendar year for all districts across Maine.

The bill also makes clear that these data and reporting requirements must be "de-identified," meaning any potentially personal identifying information has been removed so individual students cannot be identified.

Today, this process is opaque and has limited oversight. With reporting requirements like the ones contained in LD 1588, we can better understand the student transfer process from both sides of the equation: families, and superintendents. I urge the Committee to vote "Ought To Pass" on LD 1588 and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Bagshaw".

Barbara Bagshaw  
State Representative