



Michael Brennan

49 Wellington Road

Portland, ME 04103

Phone: (207) 939-6462

Michael.Brennan@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

May 16, 2025

Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan presenting

LD 318, An Act Regarding School Funding and General Purpose Aid for Local Schools

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and fellow distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Michael Brennan, and I represent House District 115, which includes a portion of Portland. Today, I am here to introduce **LD 318, An Act Regarding School Funding and General Purpose Aid for Local Schools**.

This bill directs the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) to specify certain elements of the essential programs and services funding formula to be simulated with new parameters. The Maine Department of Education (DOE) would be required to conduct simulations of the proposed parameters. Further, MEPRI would be required to solicit feedback from stakeholder representatives on the recommended potential adjustments to the funding formula in light of the forecasts prepared by the DOE.

Additionally, LD 318 would require the DOE to conduct the reviews within existing resources and MEPRI to conduct the work within its budgeted contract. MEPRI and DOE would be required to submit reports with their findings and recommendations to this committee no later than January 15, 2026.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Resolve, Directing the Maine Education Policy Research Institute and the Maine Department of Education to Recommend Changes to the Essential Programs and Services Funding Formula

Sec. 1. Maine Education Policy Research Institute to further review certain essential programs and services components; report. Resolved: That the Maine Policy Education Research Institute shall:

1. Prior to August 15, 2025: Identify updated cost model parameters for the Maine Department of Education to use in simulating projected impacts. Parameters shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Transitional recommendations for moderating the special education component's expenditure-based (Step 6) adjustment, which was found to be driving inequities within the formula;
- B. A minimum index value for the regional adjustment;
- C. Recommendation for calculating a regional index based on a valid and reliable cost-of-living measure(s);
- D. An updated per-pupil amount to more adequately fund Instructional Staff Support;
- E. A variable student weight for economic disadvantage, with higher-poverty units receiving a progressively higher student weight; and
- F. Alternative parameters and implementation guidelines for the transportation model.

2. Prior to August 15, 2025: Identify additional information needed from SAUs, to be collected by the Department of Education in Fall 2025, to examine the per-pupil costs of certain high-cost in-district special education programs and services;

3. Solicit stakeholder input on the results of simulations generated by the Department through Section 2 and submit a report summarizing the recommended parameters and results of stakeholder feedback no later than January 15, 2026.

Sec. 2. Maine Department of Education to conduct simulations of updated parameters for certain essential programs and services components; report. Resolved: That the Maine Department of Education shall:

- 1. Simulate the impacts that the parameters proposed by MEPRI in Section 1 would have had on FY2026 EPS allocations, including the impact of all parameters combined, on the following:
 - A. Total statewide cost of education
 - B. Statewide mil rate expectation
 - C. Local and state shares and state share percentage of the EPS estimated cost of education in each school administrative unit
- 2. Provide the results of the above simulations to the Maine Education Policy Research Institute no later than October 15, 2025.

LD 318 – SPONSOR CONCEPT DRAFT AMENDMENT
REP. BRENNAN

3. Submit a report summarizing the results of the above simulations, as well as any other simulated changes the Commissioner of Education may recommend, by January 15, 2026.

The joint standing committee may submit legislation related to the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2026.

The Maine Education Policy Research Institute shall conduct the above work within existing contracted resources. The Department of Education shall conduct the work within existing resources.

SUMMARY

The resolve directs the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to specify certain elements of the essential programs and services funding formula to be simulated with new parameters. The Department of Education is required to conduct simulations of the proposed parameters. The Maine Education Policy Research Institute is required to solicit feedback from stakeholder representatives on the recommended potential adjustments to the funding formula in light of the forecasts prepared by the Department of Education.

The resolve directs the Department of Education to conduct the reviews within existing resources and the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to conduct the work within its budgeted contract.

The Maine Education Policy Research Institute and Maine Department of Education are required to submit reports with their findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters no later than January 15, 2026.