

TESTIMONY SUPPORT OF

L.D. 2015

AN ACT TO REQUIRE SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS TO REPORT DATA RELATED TO EDUCATOR VACANCIES

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Eileen King, Deputy Executive Director for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association and appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of L.D. 2015, which would require superintendents of school administrative units to report annually to the Commissioner of Education the number and type of vacant teacher and educational technician positions.

We support the intent of this legislation and appreciate the Department of Education's effort to establish a consistent, statewide approach to collecting vacancy data. L.D. 2015 represents an important step toward ensuring that discussions about workforce needs are grounded in actual reported data rather than estimates.

Superintendents value accurate, comparable, and meaningful data. Requiring reporting on both the number and type of vacant positions, as outlined in the bill, will provide greater clarity around where shortages exist and which roles are most affected and which may help to guide us to reasonable solutions.

As this bill advances, we raise a couple of implementation considerations that we believe are important to ensure that reporting requirements are timely, effective and manageable for school administrative units:

- **Reporting Mechanisms:** The bill requires superintendents to report vacancy data to the Commissioner of Education but does not specify the reporting mechanism. We encourage clarification on whether this reporting will be integrated into existing Department of Education data systems or require a new reporting process.
- **Frequency and Timing of Reporting:** While L.D. 2015 establishes an annual reporting requirement, we encourage consideration of when this data will be collected. Educator vacancies can fluctuate significantly due to retirements, resignations, leaves, and mid-year staffing changes. Clear guidance on the timing will be essential to ensure the data accurately reflects workforce conditions statewide.

We appreciate that L.D. 2015 moves Maine toward a more accurate understanding of educator vacancies by requiring consistent reporting from school administrative units. With thoughtful attention to implementation details, this legislation has the potential to provide valuable insight into workforce challenges which may lead to lasting solutions to these challenges.