



Testimony in support of LD 2015 An Act to Require Superintendents of School Administrative Units to Report

Data Related to Educator Vacancies

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By Jodi Mezzanotte, Director of Educator Engagement at Educate Maine

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs: My name is Jodi Mezzanotte, and I am the Director of Educator Engagement at Educate Maine. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 2015, "An Act to Require Superintendents of School Administrative Units to Report Data Related to Educator Vacancies."

Educate Maine is a business-led education organization which champions career readiness and education attainment of Maine people by supporting education along the full continuum of life – from early childhood through adulthood. We also offer research and Maine-specific data to help inform your decisions on key education issues. In addition, I bring 23 years of public education experience in Maine, having served in roles ranging from educational technician to assistant superintendent, and most recently as a principal. Through Educate Maine's Teach Maine Center, we also work to strengthen Maine's educator workforce by supporting recruitment, retention, and pathways into the profession—work that is only as effective as the data we have to understand where vacancies exist and what positions are hardest to fill.

Maine's educator shortage is not theoretical—it shows up in real ways for students and schools every day. When teacher and educational technician positions go unfilled, schools are forced to rely on short-term fixes: reassigning staff, increasing class sizes, consolidating services, or reducing supports for students with the highest needs. These stopgap measures strain educators, disrupt consistency for children, and can widen inequities across districts.

LD 2015 is a straightforward, common-sense step: it requires superintendents to report annually the number and type of vacant teacher and educational technician positions. This matters because we cannot solve what we cannot measure. A consistent, statewide vacancy picture would help Maine:

1. Understand the true scope and patterns of shortages

A statewide, standardized vacancy count can reveal where shortages are most acute—by role (e.g., special education, math, ed techs) and by region—so resources can be targeted where they will make the biggest difference.

2. Improve planning and budgeting at the state and local level

Accurate vacancy data supports smarter workforce strategies, including recruitment incentives, grow-your-own programs, clinical placements, and professional development investments aligned with the highest-need positions. It also provides Maine's pre-service institutions and educator preparation programs with the statewide information they need to plan enrollment, tailor coursework and certification pathways, and expand programs in the areas of greatest demand, ensuring the pipeline of new educators better matches the realities districts are facing.

**3. Support students and protect services**

Vacancies in educational technician roles can directly affect special education programming, behavior supports, and student safety. Reporting both teacher and ed tech vacancies acknowledges how essential these roles are to student success and school operations.

**4. Strengthen transparency and accountability**

Communities deserve a clear picture of staffing challenges. A consistent annual report creates a public-facing baseline that can guide policy decisions over time.

LD 2015 does not solve the staffing crisis by itself—but it is a necessary foundation for the solutions Maine is already working toward. High-quality vacancy data will help us direct attention, funding, and strategies to the schools and students who need them most.

**I hope your Committee gives this proposal your unanimous support.**