

Kendrah Fisher- Dover-Foxcroft

February 20th, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee- My name is Kendrah Fisher. I live in Dover-Foxcroft, and I am a 7th-grade science teacher at SeDoMoCha Middle School. I am here to speak in support of the Governor's proposed budget and what it means for Maine's public schools, and for educators like me.

I am in my third year of teaching, and this year has been hard. Not because I don't love my job, but because the reality of being a public school teacher in Maine is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. We do not have all of the support needed for students, whether that be related to behavior, mental health, or academics. The workload continues to grow, while pay has not kept up with the cost of living. There have been moments this year where I've honestly questioned whether I can afford to stay in this profession, both financially and in terms of achieving my personal goals of owning a home or starting a family with my husband.

Maintaining 55% state funding for schools makes a real difference in classrooms like mine. It allows our schools to hire enough teachers, ed techs, interventionists, counselors, social workers, and more. It helps students get the support they need, and ensures that educators aren't stretched beyond their limits and burnt out.

Increasing the minimum teacher salary is an important issue. I am 25 years old, and without my husband's income, I would not be able to afford to live on my own. On my current salary of \$45,925.40, after covering basic living expenses, I would have less than twenty dollars left at the end of the month (see expense breakdown below). That leaves no room for emergencies or savings. Many teachers don't have the support of a second income, or have a lucky circumstance that allows them to afford to live. For a profession that requires a bachelor's degree and ongoing certification costs, this is not acceptable. Low pay is deterring too many people from the teaching profession.

Even with my husband and I both having full-time jobs that require a bachelor's degree, we cannot afford to buy a home or start a family. Those realities are incredibly discouraging, and are ones that many young educators in Maine are facing. If younger people are not choosing to enter or remain in the teaching profession, what does that mean for the future of education in Maine?

Maintaining 55% school funding, increasing mental health supports for students, and increasing teacher salaries will help keep dedicated educators in our classrooms, and encourage others to live and work in Maine schools. While funding won't fix everything, it would make a meaningful difference.

I urge you to support the Governor's proposed budget and continue investing in Maine's public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Annual Salary: \$45,925.40

Monthly Take Home Pay: \$2,574.86

(this is after taxes, retirement (MainePERS only), dental, and health insurance deductions)

Expenses

Rent- \$700.00

Heating Oil- \$350.00

Propane- \$30.00

Electric- \$140.00

Internet- \$70.00

Groceries/Toiletries- \$400.00

Cell Phone- \$80.00

Car Loan- \$256.56

Gas- \$120.00

Car Insurance- \$124.88

Rental Insurance- \$7.60

Student Loans- \$276.46

Expenses Total: \$2,555.50

Remaining Funds: \$19.36
