

State of Maine  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Paulette Bonneau, Chair of the Maine State Board of Education

In Support of: L.D. 2212

An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Presented by: Representative Gattine

Date: February 20, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Paulette Bonneau, Chair of the Maine State Board of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 2212, the Governor's Supplemental Budget; An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

The mission of the Maine State Board of Education is to provide leadership and to support policy development that promotes equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities for all students in safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments.

The Maine State Board of Education acts in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education in matters concerning state education laws. It makes education policy recommendations to the legislative and executive branches of state government on public preschool through grade 12 and postsecondary education to ensure the efficient operation of the public schools.

Under Maine law, the Board's responsibilities, in summary, include overseeing school construction approvals, administering federal funds for school facilities and career and technical education, establishing teacher certification standards, approving educator preparation programs, recommending institutions for degree-granting authority, and adjudicating student transfer appeals. We meet once a month as a full board, with four active standing committees that also meet at least once a month.

While the State Board receives some staff support from the Maine Department of Education, it is an independent body with statutory responsibilities assigned directly by the Legislature. In order

to carry out those responsibilities effectively, we are requesting a small but important technical adjustment. We must be positioned to leverage outside funding when opportunities arise.

Specifically, we ask for your support to allocate \$500 to line Other Special Revenue Funds found on page A-35 in fiscal year 2025–26. This allocation would not appropriate new spending, and it is a one-time request. Rather, it would allow the State Board to receive and expend private grant funds, should they become available.

Approximately four years ago, a Board member successfully secured a \$10,000 grant from the National Association of State Boards of Education to support school facilities work in collaboration with the Department. Because the Board did not have an open baseline in this account, those funds could not be accepted and had to be returned.

This request ensures that Maine does not miss future opportunities to leverage private funding in support of our schools. It represents sound fiscal stewardship, flexibility, and responsible governance.

The State Board stands ready to pursue partnerships and grants that strengthen policy development and statute responsibilities. We simply need the statutory mechanism to do so.

I respectfully urge your support of this modest but meaningful adjustment within LD 2212.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paulette Bonneau".

Paulette Bonneau  
Chair