

TO: Senator Ingwesen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
FROM: Jeremy Ray, Superintendent of Biddeford, Saco, and Dayton Schools
DATE: May 9, 2023
RE: **Support for LD 1817**

As Superintendent of Schools for the Biddeford, Saco, and Dayton School Departments, I am writing to express my support for LD 1817, the "Support Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program."

I believe that this program has the potential to provide invaluable experiences for Maine students, helping them develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world, improve their social and emotional skills, and engage in hands-on learning in a safe and age-appropriate way. I particularly appreciate the focus on incorporating a strong academic component that supports overall academic achievement and career trajectories, and connects science with other subjects.

The program curricula outline a comprehensive set of objectives and goals that will help students learn about the State's outdoor heritage, science, engineering, technology, mathematics, health, environment and natural resources, and sustainability. The program structure also ensures that the program is accessible to all students, regardless of their background or circumstances.

I strongly support the requirement for outdoor education program providers to collaborate with schools and teachers to access the program, and to provide equitable access to all students. The program's focus on training educators in educational strategies and fieldwork, as well as developing and participating in an evaluation program, is also essential to ensuring the program's success.

I believe that the LD 1817 "Support Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program" is an excellent initiative that will benefit the students of Maine, both in the short and long term. I urge you to support this important legislation, and to do all that you can to ensure its successful implementation.