



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning

Shelly Mogul, Auburn, President

Heather Manchester, MSAD 17, President-Elect

Deb Taylor, RSU 12, Treasurer

Beth Clifford, Maine Indian Education, Secretary

Courtney Belolan, Executive Director

Testimony of Courtney Belolan, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in support of LD 278

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Courtney Belolan and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. I offer testimony in support of LD 278 on behalf of the members of MCLA.

As we did last legislative session, MCLA strongly supports developing a way of systematically reviewing proposed instructional mandate expansions. A system for reviewing proposed legislation that compares proposed legislation with the current Maine Learning Results in their totality, curricula or courses of study already being implemented in schools around the state, and a thorough, accurate accounting of costs and necessary resources is essential to preserving the integrity of students' educational experience. This accounting must include instructional time, professional learning, and resource and material review and/or creation.

Most learners are only in our schools for thirteen or fourteen years, and the amount of content and skills in which learners are expected to demonstrate proficiency is astounding. In 1998 Dr. Bob Marzano noted in a paper titled *Awash In Standards* that "if American educators were to adequately cover all of the knowledge identified in the current set of standards for the core subject areas, it might take as much as 22 years of schooling (literally!) within the current structure." That was true twenty three years ago, and since then we have only added to the content educators must address and students must learn. If an understanding or skill is important enough to be included in state standards and expectations, then it is important enough to teach it well. In order to teach something well, there must be sufficient time, resources, and professional learning.

Maine Curriculum Leaders Association also believes that establishing a standing review committee would enable the legislative process, when applied to curriculum and training mandates, to be in sync with the already established process for reviewing and updating the Maine Learning Results which happens every five years. The review committee established by this bill would be able to recommend that the Ed Committee refer any supported additions or changes to the standards review process. This will ensure that the standards and expectations



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for what gets taught in Maine schools is centralized, and ultimately much more manageable for schools and districts.

Finally, we advocate for the committee to have consistent, or at least overlapping, membership across legislative sessions. This would enable the committee to quickly develop and refine review protocols and maintain historical knowledge within the group. MCLA strongly agrees that a standing review committee must include a variety of voices from the current Maine education community, and most importantly curriculum leaders from a range of districts across the state. This is an innovative, and important bill that will enable meaningful collaboration between the Maine education community and the Maine legislature.