

**MAINE  
PRINCIPALS'  
ASSOCIATION**



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**TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**  
**FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee**  
**RE: Neither For Nor Against LD 350: An Act to Increase the  
Number of Courses Regarding Autism Spectrum  
Disorder That Count Toward Special Education  
Certification**  
**DATE: March 22, 2021**

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Couturier and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. We represent more than 800 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools in Maine.

The Maine Principals' Association is neither for nor against LD 350. We fully support the concept of this bill. By increasing the number of autism courses that will be allowed for Special Education certification from potentially one to three would allow for those who have a BCBA and desire to become a Special Educator to be fully certified and start filling in a significant professional gap in Maine Schools without requiring them to take additional courses because they have at least two more courses in autism.

The other significant reason for supporting this bill are the courses themselves. Many of these autism courses teach skills and strategies that can be used for students who have other identified disabilities.

The only reason that the MPA is neither for nor against LD 350, is the fact that the State Board of Education is working with a Certification Task Force who are looking at revamping all of the Education Certifications in which case the requirements set by this bill may be addressed in the new version of a Special Education Certification.

For these reasons, the MPA is neither for nor against LD 350.