

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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*MPA is an Equal
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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: In Opposition of LD 655: An Act to Require at Least a
30-minute Lunch Period for Students**
DATE: March 24, 2021

Senator Rafferty, 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, representing more than 800 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee unanimously opposes LD 655. School administrators and staff create a master schedule every year to maximize the appropriate amount of time for students to learn, move, and eat. They have the flexibility to move this time if need be to meet guidelines, mandates, as well as students' needs. There are schools who currently offer a 30-minute lunch period because this is what works best in their schools and districts. Adding an additional mandate, however, could dramatically impede on the daily schedule of other schools.

There is also a concern regarding discipline. If students finish their lunch early, which most do, and they are unable to either go back to class or go outside for recess, there tends to be a significant increase in student discipline issues. This could potentially cause a student safety issue. We want to ensure that the students have enough time to eat while maintaining a safe environment as well.

The MPA urges the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 655.