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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 1383

AN ACT TO LIMIT HOMEWORK IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, deputy executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 1383.

Education law outlines the responsibilities of School Boards (Title 20-A, §1001) and chief among them are the adoption of policies that govern school administrative units, the courses of study they offer, and the educational materials they use in the teaching and learning process.

Among those policies is one on homework and its role in learning.

That policy, which is attached to this testimony, outlines principles around which homework should be assigned.

The rationale behind the policy is that School Boards recognize the positive correlation between meaningful and purposeful homework and student achievement. Homework offers an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of material; practice new skills; promote critical thinking and creativity; and, develop positive study habits.

Our School Boards and educators understand its importance and what is appropriate for different grade levels. We appreciate the survey work presented in testimony on this bill from the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association and believe its findings represent the norm.

If persons in a community are unhappy with the homework being assigned in their district or individual schools, they can talk directly to their locally elected School Board members about their concerns. We don't need a law to make that happen.

HOMEWORK

Board recognizes that education research has shown a positive correlation between meaningful and purposeful homework and student achievement. Homework offers an opportunity to deepen understanding of material, practice new skills, prepare for classroom discussion, and to promote critical thinking and creativity, positive study habits and the taking of responsibility for academic growth. Homework helps inform parents of their child's educational progress and encourages communication between school and home. The Board believes that reasonable, educationally sound, relevant and regular outside-of-class homework assignments are an important part of the total educational program.

The Board expects that homework will be assigned accordance with the following principles:

- A. Homework should be viewed as a means of extending learning opportunities beyond the school day.
- B. Meaningful, purposeful homework that is directly related to the curriculum produces the strongest achievement gains.
- C. Meaningful homework helps students develop goal setting, self-discipline, time management and organizational skills.
- D. Homework offers an opportunity for parent involvement and monitoring their child's educational progress.
- E. Homework provides teachers with additional opportunities for assessing student progress and determining instructional needs.
- F. Immediate, specific feedback must be given to students in order for homework to be effective in enhancing student learning.
- G. Homework must be realistic in length and difficulty given the students' abilities to work independently.
- H. Homework should emphasize quality rather than quantity.
- I. The amount of homework assigned should be gradually increased from grade to grade. As a student advances through school, it is reasonable to expect that the amount of homework can be increased.

The Board encourages professional staff at each grade level and/or across academic departments to work together to achieve consistency in assignment and assessment of homework. The building principal, in consultation with professional staff, may develop homework guidelines to achieve this goal.

The Board expects that any homework that is assigned will support identifiable skills, the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results and the cross-curricular *Guiding Principles* of the Learning Results.

The Board encourages professional staff at each grade level and/or academic department to work together to achieve consistency in assignment and assessment of homework. The building principal, in consultation with professional staff, may develop homework guidelines to achieve this goal.

Adopted: _____