

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
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TO: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Support of LD 961: An Act to Provide Equity in Access to Applications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
DATE: April 26, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the 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 Legislative Committee of the MPA unanimously supports LD 961. Every year, school secretaries, administrators, and food services directors continuously chase families to fill out the paper forms for free and reduced lunch. Many of the families who we need to connect with, do in fact, qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. Research demonstrates that many of the families who do qualify, do not respond well to filling out paperwork.

That being said, almost all of these families have an electronic device, or are more likely to fill out this form electronically. LD 961 allows for an additional format to fill out this application, therefore getting the financial support for their children to eat for free or at a reduced rate while at school. It does not replace, rather allow for another pathway for families to fill out this application.

The MPA strongly urges the Committee to vote unanimously Ought To Pass on LD 961.