

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



50 Industrial Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 622-0217

Fax: (207) 622-1513
Email: mpa@mpa.cc

Website:
<http://www.mpa.cc>

Paula Callan
Messalonskee
High School
President

Lori Smail
Ames and Weymouth
Elementary Schools
President-elect

Michael R. Burnham
Executive Director
Interscholastic Division

Holly D. Couturier
Executive Director
Professional Division

Michael G. Bisson
Assistant Director

*MPA is an Equal
Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Opposition of LD 1373: An Act to Keep All Maine Students Safe by Restricting the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools
DATE: May 4, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint 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 MPA Legislative Committee unanimously opposes LD 1373. While all measures are taken place to support students who may need support, there are times when a student's actions are violent, and they potentially could cause physical harm to themselves or others. During these dangerous times, it is necessary for a trained educator to physically restrain a student until he/she calms down and is safe.

Another concern is regarding the student who is in seclusion. Currently, if a student must be removed from a classroom and placed into a safe space with an adult, this is not seclusion – the student will not be alone. Should LD 1373 pass, even if an adult is in the room with the student, if the student "feels" like they cannot leave the space, this would now be considered "seclusion." This would then limit the use of a cool-down or reflection room – a strategy that is proven to be effective in calming a student down.

Our final concern is regarding two different standards: this bill is specific to students who have an IEP or a 504 plan – it does not pertain to students without an IEP or 504. This is discriminatory for all students involved.

The MPA strongly urges the Committee to vote unanimously Ought Not To Pass on LD 1373.