



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning

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Testimony of Courtney Belolan, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in support of LD 518 A Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Review and Assess Existing Educational Mandates

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I, Courtney Belolan, the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, offer testimony in support of LD 518 A Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Review and Assess Existing Educational Mandates on behalf of our members.

MCLA members strongly believe that there must be a better process for reviewing and considering educational mandates related to curriculum and instruction. As the members of the committee are aware, decisions around curriculum, materials, instruction, and assessment outside of the state accountability system are in the purview of local districts. The various professional organizations in the state, including the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, provide a strong network of support for the professionals making those decisions. In addition, there is a well established process in place, overseen by the DOE, for reviewing and updating the state standards every five years. Despite these realities, curricular mandates continue to be brought forward as legislation and sometimes pass with the two-thirds majority vote required to adopt an unfunded mandate without an accurate understanding of the costs and implications for districts.

Some of my colleagues will point out that there have been resolutions similar to LD 518 in the past. Yet, curricular mandates continue to be proposed and adopted and little has been done to address the process in terms of adopting any recommendations that may have come from past reports. Earlier this session Representative Brennan re-introduced LD 278 which proposed a review group that would support the Education Committee in understanding and assessing the viability and impact of any proposed curricular mandate legislation. We appreciated and supported this as a step towards keeping such proposals within already established systems. MCLA greatly appreciates the effort of Representative Grohoski to again raise concerns and awareness around curricular mandates and their implications for our learning communities.