

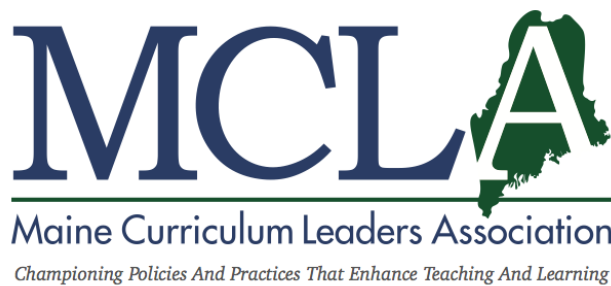
Shelly Mogul, Auburn, President
Heather Manchester, MSAD 17, President-Elect
Deb Taylor, RSU 12, Treasurer
Beth Clifford, Maine Indian Education, Secretary
Courtney Belolan, Executive Director

Testimony of Courtney Belolan, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying Neither For Nor Against LD 187 An Act To Require Education about African-American History and the History of Genocide.

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 neither for nor against LD 187 An Act To Require Education about African-American History and the History of Genocide on behalf of our members.

The Maine Curriculum Leaders Association and its members believe it is a priority for schools and districts to include the histories and perspectives of African Americans, people of African descent, and other historically marginalized groups in the local curriculum. Our organization, along with all of our partner professional organizations and the DOE, has already dedicated professional learning, time, and resources to supporting our Maines educators with this critical work and will continue to do so. This year we offered an Anti-Racism In Schools Study Group and a series of webinars in partnership with the Holocaust And Human Rights Center of Maine that explored the current equity and access realities here in Maine. Next school year one of our major projects will be professional learning opportunities and support with culture, curriculum, and instructional audits. Our disagreement with LD 187 stems from the process being used to update learning expectations, the specifying of particular resources, and the lack of funding for local districts.

The Maine Learning Results outline the learning standards for the State of Maine. Local districts retain control of decisions around curriculum, programs of study, courses, resources, and materials used to address those standards. A learning results review process already exists, and that is the appropriate process for updating or revising expectations for what is taught in Maine schools. As far as the portion of this bill that speaks to education about the history of genocide, while the Holocaust and genocide, in general, are not specifically noted in the Social Studies standards, the topics are routinely taught at a range of grade levels within districts as a part of the curriculum and programs of study that addresses the standards. According to our member poll, 100% of responding districts already include the Holocaust and/or genocide in the local curriculum in the following grade spans and ways:



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	Holocaust Specifically	Genocide In General
3-5	16%	6%
6-8	91%	73%
9-12	70%	65%

	Holocaust Specifically	Genocide in General
Specific Units	57%	10%
Thematic Units	46%	49%
Independent Projects	16%	13%
Literature Studies	84%	60%
Time-period Focused Units	73%	60%
Current Events		40%

While a fiscal note is attached to this bill, \$9,000 is for the costs of an advisory group for one year. Making a meaningful, responsible, and equitable shift in education requires funding that directly supports local districts in the review, adoption, creation of curriculum, programs of study, courses, resources materials, and the professional learning necessary for effective implementation.

MCLA believes that it is a priority to include the histories and perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as well as other historically marginalized people. The appropriate route for updating learning expectations for the State is through the already established Learning Results revision process. The most effective means of advancing the meaningful implementation of these updates is through directly funding local districts.