



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

*Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning*

*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 1664 An Act To Integrate African American Studies into American History Education**

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 1664 An Act To Integrate African American Studies into American History Education on behalf of members.

The Maine Curriculum Leaders Association and its members believe that 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 Maines educators with this critical work and will continue to do so. This year MCLA 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 diversity, equity, and inclusion audits for culture, curriculum, and instruction. Our disagreement with LD 1664 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. The state cannot specify that particular resources be used, however rich and valuable a resource such as the Gerald E. Talbot Collection. Instead, high-quality resources can be, and should be, and are often shared through professional organizations like MCLA and the DOE content specialists. I assure you we are all eager to do so.



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Making a meaningful and equitable shift in education requires funding that directly supports local districts in the review, adoption, and/or creation of curriculum, programs of study, courses, resources materials, and the professional learning necessary for effective, responsible implementation. Without ensuring funding, the districts with more resources have an easier time adopting and implementing changes, and the districts without the resources struggle.

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 all school districts.