

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 334

AN ACT TO HELP MAINE STUDENTS CATCH UP AND KEEP UP BY PROVIDING REMEDIAL AND COMPENSATORY ASSISTANCE IN RESPONSE TO EDUCATION DISRUPTION

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association neither for nor against L.D. 334.

Superintendents and School Boards appreciate the intent of this bill, and it is one we all share. We want to support all students who are less than proficient in their required subjects, whether the reason is related to an interruption of full-time, in-person instruction due to Covid or other circumstances that affect learning.

Section 2 of the bill mandates 124 hours of in-person summer instruction, which averages out to 31 days of four-hour classes, for students who cannot demonstrate proficiency in English Language Arts or Math. We agree Math and English are essential skills and appreciate the program would be funded through the Department of Education. We cannot say with any certainty, however, that all districts will have the staff this summer to do this.

The next section of the bill deals with in-school tutoring and its intent is laudable. What is unclear is who would be the volunteers providing the tutoring? We are not sure such volunteers exist in any great number. We have discussed in this committee before about tapping retired professionals to tutor in their areas of expertise. The idea is intriguing.

We would be happy to keep discussing the intent of the bill with the sponsor and the department and look at what is possible in the near and longer term.