



Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities

Support of LD 1064: An Act to Increase the Minimum Teacher Salary

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Gay Anne McDonald and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC). MADSEC is a membership organization of over 400 special education professionals, representing close to 300 private and public school special education administrators and Child Development Services special education directors across the state.

On behalf of MADSEC, I am providing testimony in support of LD 1064: An Act to Increase the Minimum Teacher Salary.

As Maine faces a critical shortage of teachers, especially in the field of special education, it is of utmost importance that we face the reality that Maine teachers are the lowest paid in New England and there is a significant upward trend in the number of teachers leaving the field. The time is now to recognize the importance of valuing and respecting the professionals who devote their careers to educating the students of Maine and pay them accordingly. A teacher shortage in Maine is not new. It is a long standing issue, exacerbated by the pandemic, and only expected to worsen. Should our state not intervene, we will not only lose the dedicated teachers currently working in Maine, but will continue to struggle with recruiting highly educated teachers to educate and empower our future leaders.

MADSEC understands that the passing of this bill may fiscally impact school administrative districts, some more than others, yet believes the risk of not steadily increasing the minimum teaching salary to \$50,000 for the school year 2027-2028 provides a greater risk to our educational system and ultimately has a greater impact on our students, particularly students with disabilities. MADSEC believes that LD 1064 provides a phase-in approach with a funding mechanism to assist school units with the increased costs, similar to the structure used in the introduction of the \$40,000 minimum teaching salary in 2019.

It is important to be mindful that an increase in the minimum teaching salary to \$50,000 may affect Maine teachers with multiple years of experience and decision makers should consider adjusting teacher salaries accordingly across the board out of respect for and in order to retain our experienced teachers.

MADSEC encourages the Committee to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 1064.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

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