



# Windham Raymond Adult Education

Thomas A. Nash, *Director*

[tnash@rsu14.org](mailto:tnash@rsu14.org)

406 Gray Road • Windham, Maine 04062

Phone: 207-892-1819 • Email: [wrae@rsu14.org](mailto:wrae@rsu14.org); Web: [www.windham.maineadulted.org](http://www.windham.maineadulted.org)

April 13, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Members of the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature's Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of **LD 1367 – An Act Regarding the Funding Formula for Adult Education**. As the Director of Windham Raymond Adult Education - RSU #14 for the past 18 years - and having served as a program director in several Maine communities for the past 37 years – I have seen very few increases in adult education state funding during that time. A substantial increase in a state commitment of dedicated funds for adult education programs not only in RSU #14 but state-wide is long overdue.

My program that serves the communities of Windham and Raymond is considered a medium-sized one in this region. We still serve nearly 100 students in Adult Basic Literacy and Numeracy, High School Completion and our Multilingual Learner (MLL) programs in both daytime and evening options.

We have only received two increases in local subsidy over the past 10 years as well. Couple that with a state subsidy formula that provides less than 50% reimbursement for allowable adult education expenditures and any local program expansion either relies on soft grant money or simply doesn't come to fruition regardless of the increased need or demand.

The pandemic created challenges and yet also opportunities for our program. We were able to shift our classes to a hybrid model, which has worked extremely well for our adult Multilingual Learners (MLL). The demand for MLL classes continues to grow, especially as New Mainers seek services outside of the Portland area. This challenge is something that we cannot sufficiently budget for nor accurately project. While some small amounts of regional or state grant funds may help provide additional instructional hours in the short-term, we will indeed require additional longer-term dedicated funding to continue to serve that population.

More and more we are also seeing disenfranchised younger high-school aged students choose to seek our services to complete their high school credential. The seamless lateral movement to the HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) or to our High School Diploma program provides that optional pathway for them. It does not come without costs to our programs though. With mostly part-time staff, as well as limited budgets for instruction and support materials, we do the best we can to meet those increasing demands but are still falling short.

Increasing adult education funding will not only provide much-needed additional classes and services to our local adult learners of all ages, but will ultimately contribute to their improved quality of life, enhancing the local economy, our communities and our state in the process.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. If you have further questions, I can be reached at 207-892-1819 or [tnash@rsu14.org](mailto:tnash@rsu14.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Nash". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Thomas Nash

Director of Adult Education

#### Our Mission:

Windham Raymond Adult Education provides affordable, high quality adult learning opportunities that meet the academic, career, and personal pursuits of our diverse adult population - families, workers, citizens and the business community.