

Jon Doty
Bradley
LD 1608

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs:

I write to you today in support of LD 1608. I am Assistant Superintendent of RSU #34 (Old Town area). I have been working with regional partners for more than a dozen years to both improve pre-service educator preparation, and to collaborate to navigate, and eventually get ahead of, worsening shortages in educator workforce. This year my schools have been fortunate to host six participants in Maine Teacher Residency.

Over the course of the last dozen years in our regional educator preparation workgroup, we have identified areas of focus that we can hone with our post-secondary partners and mentors, as well as barriers to entering and thriving in the profession. In order to thrive in the field and persist past the first several career years with a tremendous learning curve, pre-service educators need great pedagogical and content preparation, much time in the field with the support of mentors, a personal development plan, and continued support on entry. Barriers to persisting through preparation programs and early career years include access to mentoring, certification hurdles for those in atypical pathways, direct costs, and the need to temporarily put aside employment in order to complete field experiences.

I am extremely encouraged by how Maine Teacher Residency impacts both strands positively. Teacher Residency puts much focus on the mentoring aspect of preparation, and helps to defray costs for those who participate. The system-wide support for participants and mentors is thorough, and we need to normalize it.

We are very much in a staffing crisis for the educator workforce, and I urge you to continue to support LD 1608 and similar measures so that we can emerge from that crisis and best serve Maine's students going forward.

With appreciation for your service to Maine,
Jon Doty, Ed.D.