

Support of LD 343: An Act to Invest in an Educational Technician Training Program to Address Shortages in Public Schools

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. On behalf of the MADSEC Legislative Committee, I am providing testimony in support of LD 343: An Act to Invest in an Educational Technician Training Program to Address Shortages in Public Schools.

As Maine faces a critical shortage of educational technicians across the state, MADSEC supports ongoing funding to assist the Learning Facilitator Credential Program at Eastern Maine Community College for the fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Such a program allows individuals to work in Maine public schools while obtaining intensive, targeted instruction and training through a multi-phase approach. Phases include intensive classroom instruction and coursework, bi-weekly class meetings and assignments throughout an academic year, apprenticeship of over 300 hours in a public school, implementation of Community of Practice assignments, mentorship, completion of a personalized learning plan and the opportunity for micro-credentialing with demonstration of competency in content areas.

Not only does the EMCC Learning Facilitator Program address the current paraeducator shortage through its fast-tracked program for Maine's Educational Technician III certification, more importantly, it provides targeted instruction, training, and field experience specific to the education of children, resulting in highly qualified paraeducators to work with Maine students who require additional supports and services.

We highly encourage Maine's Community College System to work collaboratively in an effort to provide such programs throughout the state to best support all Maine schools, regardless of geographic location.

MADSEC encourages the Committee to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 343.

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

50 Industrial Drive, Augusta, ME 04330 • (207) 626-3380 • FAX (207) 626-3347
Web: www.madsec.org • E-Mail: info@madsec.org • gmcdonald@madsec.org

2022-2023 Officers: President Susan Fossett; President-Elect Kathleen Hamblen; Vice President, Lesley Snyer; Secretary Sandy Flacke; Treasurer Cheryl Mercier; Past-President Timothy O'Connor **Staff:** Executive Director Gay Anne McDonald; Administrative Assistant Pamela W. Ouellette