

Education is Job #1

Raise your hand if you want Maine to become a place where:

1. **Students learn more, and every student gets the same chance to succeed.**
2. **Educators have the resources and skills they need to make sure all our children reach their potential.**
3. **High-quality education lasts a lifetime, for all of us.**
4. **Better jobs and a stronger economy are on the horizon.**

Last year in Maine, 3,800 students dropped out of school and out of life... that's four of our children dropping out every school hour.¹ You could fill the largest stadium in Maine with all of the children who have dropped out over the last year.

Think of all that potential wasted. The lessons left unlearned, the skills never mastered, the confidence never gained, the dreams never realized. And the sad truth is that without a high school diploma, most of these young people won't ever earn enough to provide a decent life for their families.

Even worse, too many of our kids are graduating without the skills they need to succeed in life or a career. For Maine's economy to flourish and its citizens to prosper, we need a high quality 21st century education system that spans early childhood through lifelong learning.

PROBLEM

From early childhood through high school and college, we need to better prepare all our kids for life.

- The education journey ends badly for more than half our children, with 24 percent dropping out and 30 percent graduating unprepared for life.
- Student test scores have been flat for the past 6 years. Among 11th graders in 2008, fewer than half met the standards in math, reading or writing.
- In eighth grade, 85% of Maine students intend to continue their educations after high school. Only 40% actually do so and just 23 percent obtain some kind of post-secondary degree.
- Nearly half of Maine students need some form of remediation with their entry level college work.
- Maine people have the lowest education levels and lowest incomes among all the New England states.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Each class of 3,800 dropouts will earn \$1 billion less over their lifetimes than if they had graduated. Each year, we create thousands of struggling families and deliver another blow to our struggling economy.
- Every student we lose in a two-year degree program will earn \$10,000 less per year than if she had graduated, and every student we lose in a four-year degree program will earn \$16,500 less.
- Maine's economy would see about \$14.7 million in reduced crime spending and increased income tax revenue each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5%.
- Maine's businesses need educated and skilled employees more than ever, particularly in our fastest growing industries. Over the next decade, 90% of high-growth jobs will require education beyond high school.

¹ Alliance for Excellence in Education 2009

CALL TO ACTION

Our campaign for excellence in education will help Mainers understand how we can work together to create a more successful education system, its importance to our economy, and how we can all make a difference.

EDUCATION IS JOB #1 – For a stronger economy, better jobs and a brighter future for Maine.

Businesspeople, parents, teachers, students and everyone else who's committed to our vision of educational excellence in Maine must work together to demand action. To achieve our vision we will:

1. **Educate** – Frame the issues so they are easily understood, create a sense of urgency, and move people to action.
2. **Organize** – Build a dynamic “early childhood through lifelong learning” advocacy network at the state and local level and engage candidates with innovative business-, parent- and student-driven events.
3. **Mobilize** – Equip Mainers with the tools and information they need to take action to demand quality, opportunity and success in our schools.
4. **Achieve** – Promote, enact and implement the best-practices and -policies that prepare this and future generations of Mainers for continuing education, career and life.

OUTCOMES

The campaign for excellence in education will build the public and political will to ensure that:

- **ALL children will have access to high quality educational opportunities**
- **More young children enter kindergarten ready to learn**
- **More students will master what matters and graduate high school with a meaningful diploma**
- **More Mainers will enroll in and complete an education program beyond high school**
- **More businesses will have access to well-educated, high-skill employees**

REQUEST

We need your help to strengthen quality, opportunity and success in our schools. What can you do?

- **Lend your business or association name / logo for campaign ads / printed materials**
- **Help us reach out to your associates in the workplace and community**
- **Volunteer! Contact Dolly Sullivan at 469-3231, mcee99@aol.com.**

ABOUT THE MAINE COALITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

MCEE is an alliance of business and education leaders that for nearly two decades has been a vocal advocate for **standards-based education – the idea that students need to demonstrate they've mastered what matters and schools need to demonstrate they've improved learning.**

This simple, but profound concept was put into law in 1997 as Maine's Learning Results. For the second time since passage of Learning Results, we are approaching the dawn of a new decade and we've barely begun to reach for these goals. Let's make this a decade of leadership, commitment, action and results.

**MAINE COALITION FOR EXCELLENCE
IN EDUCATION** 