

Written testimony to the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

In support of

LD 12, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 131; The Maine Federal, State and Local Accountability Standards, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education

February 22, 2011

Senator Langley, Representative Richardson and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

As strong advocates for Maine's Learning Results, the Board of Directors of the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education submits this testimony in favor of the final adoption of the Common Core Standards by amending the rules in Chapter 131: The Maine Federal, State and Local Accountability Standards, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education to include the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten to grade 12, with implementation to begin in 2012-13. We are confident that these standards meet the threshold of rigor necessary for college and workforce readiness.

But, as we stated last spring, there is a caveat. The transition to the Common Core Standards cannot further delay putting forth a **long term plan** for education in Maine and a **strategy for implementation** – which must include **common assessments**. The adoption of the Common Core Standards must be seen as a *momentum builder* and cause for all stakeholders to come together to create a more effective education system – such that is called for in the *Prepare Maine* Blueprint (copies attached).

We see the adoption of the Common Core Standards as a means to strengthening the promise of Learning Results. Common, rigorous standards provide a level of equity that gets us beyond the 'education by ZIP CODE' dilemma and is in concert with our *Prepare Maine* initiative. We need all Maine students to succeed. That means all young children have access to high quality programs that advance their development; that Maine students graduate from high school prepared with the knowledge and skills they need for life, career, citizenship and further education; and that many more Mainers complete a college degree or industry recognized credential.

To ensure our students are prepared for success beyond high school, we need to challenge the status quo and be bold in our thinking. Adopting the Common Core State Standards is a good first step for Maine to ensure that our students are competitive, and as prepared as their fellow students in a global economy.

We will be present for the worksession and happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Yellow Light Breen, MCEE Chair
Senior Vice President – Bangor Savings Bank