



STATE OF MAINE
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

May 24, 2012

Mr. Chris Galgay
President, Maine Education Association
35 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Mr. Galgay:

As Governor, I am guided by a single principle when considering education policy –**do what is best for the student**. Research clearly demonstrates the single most important factor in student progress is an effective teacher. Therefore, I am committed to providing Maine's teachers with the best available professional development opportunities.

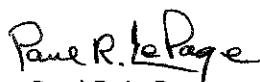
I am writing to ask the Maine Education Association (MEA) to join me in doing what is best for the students by focusing its efforts on improving the effectiveness of educators in the classroom. I reiterate my challenge to the MEA to partner with my Administration in improving professional development opportunities for teachers. Specifically, I pledge to budget state funds to match – dollar for dollar – any increase in professional development funds offered to teachers by the MEA. By working together to ensure teachers are afforded the best available tools, the latest methodologies, and the best practical training – we can put students first.

In Maine, we are blessed with many great teachers. Too often, however, union bosses worry about a wide variety of efforts – political campaigns, lobbying, protecting bad teachers, insurance sales, and providing golf and skiing discounts – which are not related to furthering the education of our children. I believe that by re-focusing your organization's energy on professional development – students will dramatically benefit.

Collaterally, educators will benefit as well. The vast majority of teachers are altruistic and caring professionals. I challenge you to ensure that your organization focuses on the needs of these teachers. If you do so, together, we can raise the prestige of the teaching profession in Maine to that of countries like Finland and Singapore who lead the world in teacher quality and, therefore, educational achievement. All while doing what is best for the students.

Let's put students first.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



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