



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

July 17, 2012

Mr. Dale Douglas
Executive Director, Maine School Management Association
49 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04330

Mr. Rob Walker
Executive Director, Maine Education Association
35 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04330

Mr. Richard Durost
Executive Director, Maine Principals Association
50 Industrial Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Gentlemen:

Please find attached a report released yesterday by Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance entitled "Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance." I was appalled, but not surprised, to see the results of this study – Maine ranks at the bottom in the nation in performance growth. This report must be a wake-up call for all involved in education in Maine. I urge all of you to stop opposing changes to this abysmal situation and join me in reforming Maine's failing education system.

The study examined national and international trends in student achievement growth in 4th and 8th grade test score gains in math, reading, and science from 1995-2009. It found that Maine is second to last in the nation in over-all achievement growth. Even more damning, Maine has the worst gains in 4th grade Math and English and Language Arts of any state in the Union.

Despite some of the highest state spending per student, Maine's schools are not meeting the needs of Maine's kids. This report proves that more money does not equate to better results and we must renew our focus through reform. We must support our teachers, improve their effectiveness and hold underperforming schools accountable; Maine students are paying the price because we have held the status quo for too long.

Our public school system is failing and those in control are allowing it to happen. There are states that are improving at two to three times the rate of Maine. If we are to improve, we must implement meaningful change such as school choice for students and families. School choice



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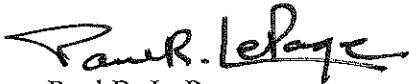
means a choice of opportunities and more access to early college programs for high school students.

Unfortunately, time and time again, the entrenched educational institutions in Maine defend the indefensible, a system that has our students achieving at the slowest rates in the country. In the last legislative session, your organizations fought against even the most modest of changes – such as becoming the 41st state in the nation to allow charter schools and the adoption of a modest open enrollment system. For the sake of Maine students, this can stand no longer.

My message to you – the leaders of the largest education organizations in the State – is simple, help me fix this broken system or get out of the way.

Let's put students first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul R. LePage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Paul R. LePage
Governor, State of Maine

cc: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education
State Board of Education