



**Date:** January 15, 2020

**Source of Report:** Letter from the Committee re: LD 664

**Topic:** School Board Communication

### **Context**

In a letter from April 2019, the Education Committee chairs respectfully requested that the Department of Education implement a listserv for local school board members to assist with communication among various local school boards. The letter was sent regarding proposed legislation that would have required the Maine State Board of Education to organize biannual county meetings for school boards.

### **Actions**

On July 11, 2019 members of the Department of Education's Legislative and Communications team met with leadership from the Maine School Board Association (MSBA) and the Maine School Management Association (MSMA). During the meeting we discussed the letter from the Committee and recommendations for school board members to communicate among themselves on a regional basis.

### **Findings**

The Department learned that the MSBA has developed a regional structure for meetings and communication among school boards organized geographically by the nine superintendent regions. For example, at the Fall Conference, MSBA Board of Directors facilitated regional, face-to-face meetings of school board members who attended the conference. The purposes of these meetings were to have local board members meet, connect, and share successes and challenges. Furthermore, MSBA has outlined steps for a Regional Structure that includes convening for regional meetings and electing a regional director - or president - a vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The Regional Structure will provide a link among MSMA/MSBA, school board members, and to the extent needed, the Department. Topics for meeting agendas will be determined by the regional structures, anticipated agenda topics include legislation, funding, and advocacy. The Director of Communications in the Department of Education will use that network to disseminate information of interest to the regional school board groups.

### **Recommendations**

In collaboration with MSBA, the Department communicates directly to school board members on an as-needed basis to disseminate information. Additionally, school board members have been encouraged to sign-up to receive DOE Newsroom publications. The Commissioner of Education meets with MSBA's Executive Committee annually to discuss current issues, needs,

and available support. Most recently, Commissioner Makin attended MSBA's quarterly board meeting on January 4, 2020 in Augusta, Maine.

### **References**

Maine School Boards Association (n.d.), *Working Together Across the State*

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ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

A. Pender Makin  
Commissioner of Education  
Maine Department of Education  
23 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

April 9, 2019

Dear Commissioner Makin:

On behalf of the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, we are writing to you in regards to LD 664, An Act to Organize Biannual County Meetings for Local School Boards.

During the public hearing and work session, we heard about the need for more opportunities for members of local school boards to have dialogue, discussion, and an open exchange of ideas with members of other local school boards. The committee does not feel that legislation is necessary at this time. However, we respectfully request that the department create and implement a listserv for school board members in order to assist school board members' communication with members of other local school boards.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sen. Rebecca J. Millett  
Senate Chair

Rep. Victoria P. Kornfield  
House Chair

Cc: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs