

Risler, Hillary

From: Michael Brennan <mfpbrennan@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 3:21 PM
To: Risler, Hillary; Mattie Daughtry; Shagoury, Dan
Subject: Letter

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Hillary, Mattie,

Below is the draft of a cover letter or separate letter to be considered tomorrow by the Committee for the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.

Dear Senator Breen and Representative Pierce,

Attached is a copy of the report from the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs regarding the Supplemental Budget. Thank you for providing us the opportunity to participate in a work session with your Committee and we stand ready to provide any additional information that may assist you in your deliberations on the budget.

In addition to reviewing the budget, for the last three weeks, the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee has been engaged in a series of presentations with the Department of Education, the University/Community College systems, and numerous stakeholders on the impact COVID19 has had on our educational system in the state of Maine. Across the board, educators, staff, parents, and students have worked diligently to address the issues related to COVID-19 while still keeping our schools and universities/colleges operational. This is a tribute to Maine's commitment to offering an array of educational opportunities for all citizens during this challenging era.

At the same time, we identified several areas of concern that warrant the collective attention of our committees as well as the entire Legislature. While this list is not exhaustive, it is illustrative of the issues before us.

- * Access to broadband on a consistent basis.
- * The assessment of learning loss and implementation of plans to assist with academic recovery.
- * Across the board workforce shortages of school personnel.
- * Development of a plan to vaccinate school personnel.
- * Access to COVID-19 testing, appropriate building spacing, and adequate ventilation.
- * Assisting Special Education students and families.
- * Providing opportunities for students engaged in performing arts.
- * Engaging students, especially in rural Maine, to pursue post-secondary education.

In the coming weeks, we plan to conduct sessions on issues related to food security and mental health/substance use and will provide you and the Committee with any pertinent information.

Again, thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Senator

Representative

--

Michael

Michael Brennan

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