

## Leading the Way to Great Public Schools for Every Maine Student

The Maine Education Association believes that every child has the right to receive an excellent education at a great public school. We believe the keys to Great Public Schools are:

- Parent and community involvement and support;
- Fully qualified teachers and education support professionals committed to students and their learning;
- Adequate funding and resources;
- Highly skilled and collaborative professional leadership;
- Challenging curriculum that is flexible, innovative, and complete; and,
- Safe and supportive environments.

### Parent and community involvement and support

Great Public Schools are an integral part of the future of Maine and its communities. Their importance is recognized with a high degree of parent and community involvement and support that is critical to the success of its students.

Parents are involved as stakeholders in making decisions that affect student learning, and they collaborate with teachers and support professionals to provide access to high quality educational experiences for all students. School events are well attended by parents and the community.

Public support is demonstrated in the passage of budgets providing adequate funding for student learning, teacher and staff resources, professional development and preparation time, and professional salaries.

### Fully qualified teachers and educational support professionals committed to students and their learning

Great Public Schools employ fully certified teachers who have strong backgrounds in best practices and current research in their content area(s). There is a healthy, balanced understanding of what it means to be a professional within a system of continuous improvement.

Great Public Schools ensure that all other educational staff in their employ are fully qualified/certified. They provide all educational staff with the necessary training for professional development needs that arise within the areas of their expertise.

Ownership for professional development is cultivated and informed by student, teacher and other educational staff needs. Professional development is effective, meaningful and driven by student, teacher and other educational staff needs. It is easily available both within and outside of the school day.

Mentoring and collegial supports, as well as adequate funding, are in place to assure effective and meaningful work. Time is provided and protected during the school day for implementation of new ideas, for authentic assessment, and for reflection on professional improvement.

Professional development decisions create an atmosphere in which all children are given the opportunity to learn and be successful.

### Adequate funding and resources

Great Public Schools require adequate and stable funding sources equitably provided by state and local governments. Preparing Maine's students for the 21st Century is the primary responsibility of public schools and that mission requires a meaningful commitment to "adequate and responsible funding" in real dollars for programs from pre-kindergarten through graduate school.

Great Public Schools are modern, clean, and safe environments that provide state-of-the-art technology and classrooms. Teachers and support professionals within these environments understand that alternative structures for the school year and school day may be necessary to provide the time to plan and implement a comprehensive curriculum.

To improve teaching and student learning, investments must be made in professional development in order to retain the best and brightest teachers and support professionals. To enhance school culture, additional work assignments or responsibilities that increase the workload of teachers must be compensated beyond regular salary levels. To best meet the needs of all students, sufficient staff, instructional resources, and professional collaboration time must be provided and allocated intelligently.

### Highly skilled and collaborative professional leadership

The mission, vision, and goals of Great Public Schools honor community values. Respectful collaboration creates conditions of support among all stakeholders.

Teachers and support professionals are respected equally for their expertise and contributions to the success of all students. They share decision-making and accountability for the success of each school with administrators.

As experts in the content, knowledge and skills required for success in their profession, teachers are a major voice in the development of educational policy. Teachers are encouraged to be facilitators and educational leaders with collaborative decision-making the norm.

The principal, as the lead teacher of the school, is responsible for leading by example as demonstrated through successful teaching, knowledge of current research, and encouragement for the use of best practices.

Respect for individual differences, knowledge of best practices, competence in understanding legal agreements, and honest and clear communication characterize an expert school or district leader who earns the confidence of teachers, support staff, parents, and students while advocating for public education.

### Challenging curriculum that is flexible, innovative, and complete

Great Public Schools ensure a well-rounded, sequential curriculum from pre-kindergarten through higher education with sensible, meaningful standards and assessments based on growth models of individual success that serve to hold parents, educators, and the community accountable for the success of all students.

A comprehensive curriculum calls for a variety of teaching styles and multiple measures of student achievement to honor the needs of all learners.

Recognizing that a comprehensive curriculum in the 21st century goes far beyond the 3R's, a teacher-developed curriculum uses a variety of best practices and tools to engage students in learning as they prepare for a complex world.

As students progress, a variety of alternatives to a four-year high school degree are available that include, but are not limited to, expeditionary learning or high school student access to college credit. Great Public Schools, with the support of parents, community, and staff prepare all students for successful entry into their area of choice.

### Safe and supportive environments

Great Public Schools provide a safe environment for all members of the school community. They inspire a culture where trust, diverse opinions, concerns and needs are heard and protected.

A safe environment includes small classes with adequate staff and resources to meet the needs of individual learners. Teachers support each other through mentoring programs designed to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Community and professional leaders respect and support students, teachers, and staff with responsible funding and a safe, well maintained facility. Students support one another as individuals with varied backgrounds and cultures.

Meals, school materials, physical safety, trust and caring adult intervention are examples of the hierarchy of needs that must be met to provide an environment that is safe and respectful.