

Education

What are our aspirations for an inclusive and equitable Maine?

- Family engagement in early childhood learning that readies children for kindergarten
- A culture of collaboration and partnership between schools and the surrounding community
- Our schools involved in meaningful work
- A wide variety of public school options
- Schools funded in an equitably proportional way
- Proper pay and respect for teachers
- Opportunities for youth to learn in ways that meet their needs
- Diverse teachers teaching cultural content /diverse topics that reflect those being taught throughout all years of education.
- Improvement regarding the overdiscipline of students of color and disability
- Outside/play time integrated into the learning

Why isn't it like that today?

Current Funding Model

- Lack of funding from all levels
- Difference between perceived funds and actual available amount, often time underestimating what can be done with what we have
- The difference in funds for programming between rural and urban school systems
- Current funding model for public education
- School funding based on community capacity and real estate taxes without agreement universally to what quality education and outcomes need to be.

Not Meeting the Needs of All Students

- Schools don't value individual difference
- Not all children are created equal and are valued in society
- Meeting individual student needs is difficult
- One size fits all mentality
- Skill and knowledge base needs to be expanded in order to meet students' needs

School Structure and Lack of Support

- Teachers, principals and superintendants are burdened with unworkable state and federal mandates thus can't focus on education.
- School cultures can be competitive and unreceptive to collaboration
- Teachers are not allowed to make creative lesson plans
- Lack of parent involvement
- Accountability not responsibility
- Lack of community support
- Schools aren't allowed to express a growth mindset
- Schools in the US are viewed as competitive employee makers as opposed to change makers
- Reformation not transformation

- System based on "industrial factory model," too big, too standardized, too bureaucratic
- Education isn't valued
- Teachers are asked to focus on testing instead of addressing the needs of the surrounding community and world

Issues for Early Education

- Lack of professional development for preschool teachers
- Little faith in early education and an all around lack of understanding of it
- Early education is expensive

Other

- Education options are limited
- Not enough offsite learning opportunities
- Little emphasis on compassion and promoting impactful careers
- If an opinion is not expressed by the majority it is ignored
- Too much dependence on technology
- Current adult literacy rate
- Youth voice and teacher voice often remains unheard
- Racism, discrimination and bias

What can we begin to do about it?

Increase Community Support

- More local control with additional support from the surrounding community
- Partnerships with community organizations at all levels
- More social support at schools which transforms it into a positive environment as opposed to the punitive one that it is now

Increase Voices and Involvement

- Increased teacher voice
- Let student voices be heard
- Involve family in education
- Listen to all stakeholders
- Support immigrant families in learning

Value and Support Teachers

- Invest in all teachers
- Coordinate teacher training
- Value teachers
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Allow diverse teachers to teach workshops in their area of expertise or on cultural competency

Advocate for Education

- Run for office
- Effectively advocate around core issues
- Inform ourselves and community about who we are voting for and their stances on education
- Invite site visits from legislators

Other

- Accountability vs. responsibility, root causes not symptoms
- Model innovation and promote change
- Share solutions and models that work
- Connect students with job learning opportunities
- Decrease childhood hunger and poverty
- Investigate "pay for success" education
- Change funding model
- Balance increased access to technology with emphasis on getting kids outside often
- More choices for public schools (i.e. residential public schools, theme-based etc.)