

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Makin, Pender](#)
Subject: Re: message from all of us at the leadership team
Date: Friday, February 21, 2025 12:15:28 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-szr3e3t5.png](#)
[Outlook-zhaaxsre.png](#)
[Outlook-ukvd5mra.png](#)

Pender,

A heartfelt thanks for this information. It has been stressful, and I wholeheartedly appreciate the transparency and diligence in protecting our students, communities, and infrastructure, which we have all worked so hard to build. I hope you are taking care of yourself as well.

Warmly,

[REDACTED], MPH, RN, NCSN (she/her)

School Nurse Specialist - Coordinated School Health

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From: Makin, Pender <Pender.Makin@maine.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 10:46 AM
To: DOE ALL DYN <DOEALLDyn@maine.gov>
Subject: message from all of us at the leadership team

Dear Maine DOE team members,

Before the weekend—and in light of recent developments — we wanted to be sure you all have as much up-to-date information as possible. These past few weeks have been filled with uncertainty, and the leadership team recognizes and empathizes with the

stress that uncertainty may be causing. We want to assure you that we are working diligently to determine the implications of recent actions at the Federal level, so that we can provide the best-possible guidance to you—and you, then, can provide the best-possible guidance to the folks you work with day-in and day-out in the field.

To begin, you may be aware that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) [published a "Dear Colleague" letter](#) (DCL) last Friday, February 14, related to the current Administration's interpretations of and intentions regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The Maine DOE received the following clarification from the Council of Chief State School Officers, which we would like to share with you, if you haven't yet seen it:

"The DCL, by itself, is not an enforcement mechanism. Title VI enforcement is governed by [federal regulations](#) that require ED to take specific steps before taking enforcement actions. For example, [ED may not suspend, terminate, or refuse to grant or continue federal financial assistance until](#) it has provided the recipient with notice of noncompliance, attempted to secure compliance through voluntary means, provided an opportunity for a hearing, made an express finding of noncompliance on the record, filed a written report with Congress, and waited 30 days after filing the report. ED's OCR has [authority](#) to conduct periodic [compliance reviews](#) and [directed investigations](#) of Title VI compliance absent a specific complaint. ED also has [authority to investigate specific complaints](#), explained in more detail on [OCR's website](#). When ED investigates a potential civil rights violation, it follows a [formal process](#)."

Also, last night, the President directly referenced the State of Maine, declaring his plan to withhold Federal funding from Maine because of reports that a transgender athlete is allowed to compete in high school sports.

As you all know, the Maine Human Rights Act protects all people, including transgender people, from discriminatory practices and harassment. This law was enacted by the Maine Legislature and Maine DOE has advised MPA and all schools to follow the laws of our state. There are many congressional barriers and checks and balances of government that should prevent the president from acting on his statement.

This morning, Governor Janet Mills released the following statement:

"If the President attempts to unilaterally deprive Maine school children of the benefit of Federal funding, my Administration and the Attorney General will take all appropriate and necessary legal action to restore that funding and the academic opportunity it provides. The State of Maine will not be intimidated by the President's threats."

Additionally, Attorney General Aaron Frey released this statement:

"It is disturbing that President Trump would use children as pawns in advancing his political agenda. Any attempt by the President to cut federal funding in Maine unless

transgender athletes are restricted from playing sports would be illegal and in direct violation of federal court orders. Fortunately, though, the rule of law still applies in this country, and I will do everything in my power to defend Maine's laws and block efforts by the President to bully and threaten us."

The leadership team is planning to host an all-staff meeting on Monday, February 24 to provide a space for updates, questions, and comments. Please keep an eye on your email inbox for a meeting invitation shortly.

Thank you, as always, for everything you do. Your leadership in this moment is incredibly important.

Pender Makin

Commissioner

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