MCLA’s mission is to support curriculum leaders and champion curriculum, instruction, and assessment policies and practices that enhance learning.

Impacting 140,000 Maine students from Fort Kent to Kittery.

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TO: Beth Lambert, Maine Department of Education
FROM: Heidi McGinley, Executive Director, Maine Curriculum Leaders’ Association
RE: Comments on ELA, Math, and CED Standards
DATE: December 3, 2018

In March 2018 the Maine Curriculum Leaders’ Association (MCLA) offered these points on the standards revision process for the department’s consideration, which are still relevant as new content areas enter the standards revision process:

1. The purpose of state standards should determine the structure and content of the standards themselves.
2. The revision process for all content areas should be transparent and overseen by a single stakeholder steering committee to ensure alignment with the statutory purpose of the standards.
3. National resources that inform state standards development in ELA and math include cross-cutting skills and practices, both within each content area and across several others. Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary connections are important in local standards use.

State standards revisions take place amid uncertainty about the purpose of state standards in local curriculum, instruction, and assessment and their relevance in local diploma requirements. We think the following questions need to be answered before standards in these three content areas are revised or adopted:

- How have the current math and ELA standards impacted student achievement in Maine?
- What is the purpose of the Career and Education Development standards? The current standards basically describe a process for student development of a personal career plan. Is a full K-12 scope and sequence necessary to provide students with the opportunity to do that?
- Are the new standards and descriptors intended as a model K-12 curriculum or a required K-12 curriculum? Will districts be able to choose (or write) those standards they believe are most important for all students’ post-secondary options?
- What revisions have other states made in their ELA and math standards? How will their work inform Maine’s process? If other states have reduced the number of standards and indicators, how will that impact Maine’s work?