

Morning Sentinel

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WEATHER:
 Mostly sunny
 High 67°
 Details, B6

CentralMaine.com

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School district leaders: Funding formula update overdue



Scarborough High School newspaper students gather for a meeting last summer. The Scarborough School District would lose the most funding under a proposed bill and district leaders were the only ones to speak against it. (DARYN SLOVER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

A bill to reform the long-criticized Essential Programs and Services formula got support from districts around the state at a hearing Monday. Some said it could go even further in reducing inequities.

By RILEY BOARD
 Staff Writer

School leaders from across Maine agree: a bill to reform Maine's public education funding formula would be a good first step in improving equity for districts and students.

"It's fair to say that over the last several years, the Essential Programs and Services school funding formula ... has not been working well for the majority of Maine school districts," Rep. Kelly Murphy, D-Scarborough, said Monday while introducing the bill before the Legislature's Educa-

tion and Cultural Affairs Committee. More than 30 superintendents, school board chairs and municipal and education leaders testified during a three-hour public hearing that the current formula is woefully outdated, and isn't working for Maine students, or taxpayers. But many also said reforms beyond those laid out in this bill, which was drafted from recommendations made by a nonpartisan research group, might be necessary.

The proposed changes — which include factoring the local poverty

rate into a district's ability to pay, and updating regional adjustments to be linked to cost-of-living models — are intended to make distribution of funding more equitable.

"LD 2226 does not solve everything ... but it inches us toward something in a formula that has needed fixing for a very long time," said Matt Nelson, who leads the Sanford School Department, one of the state's largest and most economically disadvantaged districts with a student poverty rate of nearly 60%. "Pass this bill and let's commit to continuing the work."

The current model, rolled out two decades ago, calculates a district's

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LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVE TRAINING



Roger Bachelder waits to start his dive Wednesday at a training hosted by Maine State Police that brings state agencies and marine patrol officers from across New England to Rangeley Lake. "We want to make sure that those divers are cool, calm and collected and operating at 100%," said Chris Cookson, a sergeant for Maine State Police and a commander for the state dive team. **STORY, B1** (QUENTIN BLAIS/STAFF WRITER)

TODAY'S ALMANAC

March 10, 2026

Today is the 69th day of 2026. There are 296 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 10, 1959, thousands of Tibetans rebelled against occupying Chinese forces, surrounding the Dalai Lama's palace to protect him from potential harm. Fierce fighting between Tibetans and Chinese forces ensued, causing the Dalai Lama to flee Tibet for India, where he remains in exile today.

Also on this date:

In 1969, James Earl Ray pleaded guilty in Memphis, Tennessee, to assassinating civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (Ray later repudiated that plea, maintaining his innocence until his death.)

In 2019, a Boeing 737 Max 8 operated by Ethiopian Airlines crashed shortly after takeoff from the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, killing all 157 people on board.

Today's birthdays:

Actor Chuck Norris is 86. Actor Sharon Stone is 68. Actor Jasmine Guy is 64. Music producer Rick Rubin is 63. Singer-songwriter Edie Brickell is 60. Actor Jon Hamm is 55. Rapper-singer Bad Bunny is 32.

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Q&A: Sen. King on Iran, Israel and a war without precedent



“One of the most disappointing things about this whole operation is a lack of planning what's next.”

SEN. ANGUS KING, I-Maine

The senator expanded on his frustration after Congress failed to put more checks on President Donald Trump.

By BILLY KOBIN
 Staff Writer

Sen. Angus King woke up earlier this month to the news that the U.S. and Israel had launched strikes against Iran. Days later, he was forced to reckon with what he sees as Congress' failure to approve checks on President Donald Trump's war powers.

The 81-year-old senator, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, has a lot on his mind. He says he knows “of no historical precedent” for how the Iran attacks unfolded. Overnight, the Middle East was swept into a broader war

that has no immediate end in sight.

While King has previously warned that Trump is defying constitutional norms, he also has taken flak from progressives for voting to confirm some Trump nominees. He spoke with the Press Herald by phone from Washington on Thursday for a wide-ranging Q&A.

The interview came one day after Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and most Senate Republicans voted to defeat the war powers resolution meant

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Oil prices rise as Iran names a new leader

By JON GAMBRELL,
 JAMEY KEATEN and SAMY MAGDY
 Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Oil prices surged and markets slid Monday after hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei was chosen to succeed his late father as Iran's supreme leader, signaling that Iran was digging in 10 days into the war launched by the United States and Israel.

Oil prices later fell, and the U.S. stock market closed higher, amid

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AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

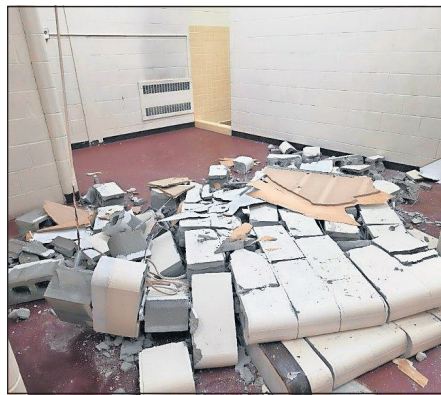
Wall collapses in locker room during state basketball championship

None of the Monmouth Academy boys were seriously injured and the Mustangs went on to win 51-41.

By MIKE MANDELL
 and ETHAN HORTON
 Staff Writers

AUGUSTA — Aiden Oliveira and his Monmouth Academy boys basketball teammates were inside an Augusta Civic Center locker room preparing to play a state championship game last month when they heard a loud crash.

When Oliveira, a senior, turned around, he saw a pile of cinder blocks



The non-load-bearing concrete wall was not built to modern standards, Augusta's director of code enforcement said. (CITY OF AUGUSTA)

and rubble on the floor.

A non-load-bearing wall, which was between the shower area and a small alleyway, had collapsed, bringing down part of the ceiling.

"Everyone kind of just stopped for a second, and we were like, 'What just

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Advocates say Medicaid rule changes would cut disability services for kids

The intent is to update outdated references and clarify language, says a spokesperson for Maine DHHS.

By JOE LAWLOR
 Staff Writer

Child advocates say proposed rule changes by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services would cause some children with disabilities to lose access to Medicaid services.

The department is seeking changes to a portion of the Medicaid program that offers behavioral and developmental services for

children. Lindsay Hammes, a spokesperson for DHHS, said in a statement that the intent is to “update outdated references and clarify vague language” in the existing rules.

Nancy Cronin, executive director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, and others have warned that the move would reduce eligibility. Cronin said the proposed changes would leave children with certain diagnoses, such as attention deficit disorder and cerebral palsy, ineligible for services.

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