

SENATE

JOSEPH RAFFERTY, DISTRICT 34, CHAIR
TERESA PIERCE, DISTRICT 25
JAMES LIBBY, DISTRICT 22

ELENA ROIG, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
KAREN NADEAU, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
MAURA TAYLOR, COMMITTEE CLERK



HOUSE

KELLY NOONAN MURPHY, SCARBOROUGH, CHAIR
JANICE S. DODGE, BELFAST
MICHAEL F. BRENNAN, PORTLAND
W. EDWARD CROCKETT, PORTLAND
HOLLY T. SARGENT, YORK
CHRISTINA R.C. MITCHELL, CUMBERLAND
SHEILA A. LYMAN, LIVERMORE FALLS
BARBARA A. BAGSHAW, WINDHAM
KIMBERLY M. HAGGAN, HAMPDEN
NATHAN W. CARLOW, BUXTON

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

To: Senator Peggy Rotundo, Senate Chair
Representative Drew Gattine, House Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Senator Joseph Rafferty, Senate Chair *JR*
Representative Kelly Murphy, House Chair *KM*
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Date: March 3, 2026

Re: LD 2212, An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Following the jointly-held public hearing on February 20, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs held two separate work sessions on its portion of LD 2212, the supplemental budget: one on Wednesday, February 25 and another on Thursday, February 26. The attached report-back document contains the results of the Committee's votes on each initiative. Also attached to this memo are documents detailing the Committee's proposed amendments to certain initiatives as well as newly-proposed initiatives.

After deliberation and votes on initiatives under the Committee's jurisdiction, each party represented on the Committee appreciates the opportunity to offer the following comments on matters related to the supplemental budget.

I. Democratic Caucus

The Democratic caucus of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs appreciates Governor Mills's continued commitment to education in the State of Maine. From preschool through adult and higher education, the majority caucus recognizes the Mills Administration's efforts to prioritize and expand learning opportunities for all Maine students. In particular, the majority caucus would like to emphasize their support for:

- Continuation of funding for the Building Assets, Reducing Risk (BARR) program
 - *See attachment for newly-proposed initiatives from the Committee*

- Additional funding for two initiatives that support homeless students/students at risk of homelessness
 - *See attachment for newly-proposed initiatives from the Committee*
 - Maintaining 55% of State funding for the total cost of education
 - Ref. #176 on p.8 of the report-back document
 - A statewide \$50,000 minimum teacher salary
 - Language Part SSS; *see attachment for proposed amendment*
 - Continuation and making permanent the Free Community College program
 - Ref. #682 on p.1 of the report-back document & Language Part QQQ
 - Funding for Maine Public emergency broadcasting
 - Ref. #632 on p. 22 of the report-back document
 - A “bell-to-bell” cell phone ban in Maine schools
 - Ref. #180 on p. 9 of the report-back document & Language Part GG; *see attachment for proposed amendment*
 - \$2 million for higher education research and development
 - Ref. #693 on p. 23 of the report-back document
 - \$16 million to support public preschool programming/Child Development Services
 - Language Part PP
-

II. Republican Caucus

The Republican caucus of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs offers the following guidance and justifications for various portions of the budget. Related to the Maine State Library’s proposed positions, the minority caucus does not support using Maine taxpayer dollars to fill in the gap for the loss of federal funding for these positions. Specifically, the minority caucus is concerned with the inclusion of a Library Section Supervisor positions (ref. #583), particularly since the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program has been discontinued.

Moreover, the minority caucus does not support any of the AI initiatives (for the Maine State Library and others) due to the siloed nature of each entity’s AI efforts, rather than there being a centralized hub for entities to share information. Additionally, the minority caucus feels that there may be a duplication of efforts for AI development – there is likely already many millions of dollars invested into AI development across the country and at the federal level. Thus, there is no reason for Maine to “reinvent the wheel” when it comes to AI.

The minority caucus opposes the proposed \$200,000 to Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation (ref. #632), particularly since this is in addition to the \$600,000 the Corporation requested in LD 2003. Similarly to our opposition to the Maine State Library positions, we do not believe that the Maine taxpayers should be responsible for replacing a reduction in federal funding.

We also oppose using taxpayer dollars to pay for “free” community college as proposed in the budget (ref. #682 and Language Part QQQ). At a minimum, the minority caucus believes that the program should include some additional guardrails. For example, the eligibility for tuition-free community college should be reserved for students who graduated from Maine high schools and that are able to meet certain minimum attendance and grade point average standards. While programs like the Maine State Grant Program and Pell Grants pay for students who truly need help paying for college, the Free Community College program pays for students who don’t

necessarily need assistance, and the “last dollar” nature of the program ultimately favors wealthy families. The minority caucus would instead support using the funding for Maine students to attend a college of their choice – including four-year universities and private colleges – so that students choose their postsecondary path based on their own interests rather than simply because the tuition is “free.”

The minority caucus generally supports the research and development funding for the University of Maine System (ref. # 693) as this funding will be used to grow Maine’s economy. Further, the minority caucus would support additional funding for Maine Maritime Academy rather than a reduction in their allocation.

The minority caucus believes the budget for the Department of Education, in general, is bloated. The caucus does not support funding any new positions in the department; the department has numerous unfilled positions and, rather than using saving that money or transferring it to fund the new ones, they instead propose using some money from unfilled positions for grant management (Language Part QQ-2). In addition, the minority caucus is concerned that there is seemingly no savings from any elimination of positions in Child Development Services (CDS). Since the responsibility for a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) is shifting away from CDS to the local schools, presumably some positions in CDS are no longer necessary and yet there does not appear to be corresponding savings in the budget. The caucus also echoes their earlier sentiments about funding for AI initiatives for the department’s AI funding.

We also are not supportive of a statewide cell phone ban in schools, nor of allocating the associated funding (ref. #180). Last session, the Legislature enacted LD 1234 which required school boards to adopt a policy related to the use of cell phones in schools by August 2026. Unlike the proposal in the budget (Language Part GG), LD 1234 did not require school boards to ban cell phones. As this legislation only went into effect in September of 2025, the minority caucus believes that not enough time has elapsed to truly measure the efficacy of allowing schools to develop their own policies, and many policy developments are still underway across the State. In the spirit of local control, we believe there are new ideas that could come to light that have not yet been explored, and allowing districts to develop their own ideas is the best option.

Finally, the minority caucus is unable to support using taxpayer money to raise the statewide minimum salary for teachers for several reasons. First, historically, many people enter the teaching profession for the love of children rather than for the money. Second, the minority caucus would like to highlight that the National Council on Teacher Quality recently gave several Maine teacher preparation programs an “F,” particularly for their ability to prepare teachers to teach students how to read. In the interest of fairness, teachers should see an increase in their salary only once they have proven themselves to be performing well and moving on from their probationary status. As an alternative, the minority caucus believes that, rather than only funding an increase for the minimum/step 1 salary, it would be preferred to fund increases across all the salary steps. The minority caucus also wishes to highlight the fact that the median salary in Maine is approximately \$45,000 for a year of work – teachers only work for part of the year and their salary should reflect as much. Some members of the caucus also oppose the notion that teachers should not have to work an additional job over the summers to supplement their income.

Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations offered by the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs. Should you have any questions regarding the report-back, please do not hesitate to reach out to the committee chairs.

Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
Proposed Amendments to Existing Initiatives in the Supplemental Budget (LD 2212)
March 2026

I. Amendments related to the Governor's AI Task Force initiatives (Maine State Library, University of Maine System, Department of Education)

A majority of the Committee voted in favor of initiatives relating to the Governor's Artificial Intelligence Task Force which appear within the Maine State Library budget (see Ref #s 591, 592, 593, 594 on pages 17-18 of the report-back document), the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System budget (Ref # 695 on pages 23-24 of the report-back document) and the Department of Education budget (Ref #203 of pages 8-9 of the report-back document) with the following amendment.

The amendment directs the Maine State Library to submit a report detailing the manner in which the Maine State Library is coordinating with other entities regarding these initiatives to the joint standing committee of the Legislature with jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs matters no later than March 15, 2027. These initiatives provide funds to the Maine State Library to develop a program to promote public literacy and safety related to artificial intelligence.

Under the University of Maine System budget (Ref #695), the amendment proposes to direct ongoing funds under this initiative to a new fund, the "Public AI Innovation Fund," rather than the Maine Economic Improvement Fund as proposed in the budget. Further, the amendment directs the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature with jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs no later than March 15, 2027, detailing how the university system is working with other entities to establish a state artificial intelligence public innovation hub.

II. Amendment to Language Part GG (cell phone ban)

A majority of the Committee voted in favor of replacing Language Part GG with the following:

Sec. GG-1. 20-A MRSA §1001, sub-§23 is repealed.

Sec. GG-2. 20-A MRSA §1001, sub-§23-A is enacted to read:

23-A. Cellular telephone policy. By August 1, 2026, a school board shall adopt and implement a policy prohibiting student use of personal electronic devices for the duration of the school day, from starting bell to dismissal bell. The policy must restrict student use of cellular telephones and other personal electronic devices with Internet or cellular network capabilities. The Department of Education, in coordination with Maine School Management Association and other relevant stakeholders, shall make available a model policy for school boards. The model policy must include exceptions for compliance with a student's individualized education program, a documented Section 504 accommodation plan, the delivery of prescribed medical care as outlined in a student's individualized healthcare plan and language support services for emergent English language learners when no other translation option is available.

III. Amendment to Language Part SSS (minimum teacher salary)

A majority of the Committee voted in favor of amending Language Part SSS as follows (voted as a single amendment):

A majority of the Committee supports adding language to ensure that teachers in the Unorganized Territory are also included in the required minimum teacher salary statute. Because schools in the UT are technically entities of the State and not school administrative units, the language as written would not include them.

In addition to the above inclusion, Commissioner Makin's written testimony noted that additional language would be included in an upcoming change package to ensure that the State provides funding to meet the requirements of the new minimum teacher salary requirements through fiscal year 2029-30. A majority of the Committee also supports this important language to make sure local schools are supported through the transition to a minimum \$50,000 salary.

**Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Newly-proposed Initiatives to the Supplemental Budget (LD 2212)
March 2026**

The following initiatives were proposed as new items to include in the supplemental budget. Please note that not every proposal received majority support from the Committee.

I. Funding for Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR)

A member of the Committee proposed a new initiative to provide \$2 million to support the Building Assets, Reducing Risk (BARR) program in Maine schools. Implementation of the BARR program is already underway in many Maine schools, and the proposed funding is intended to complete the implementation of the program.

The Committee's vote on this initiative was **IN: 10-1**.

II. Funding for programs to support homeless students/students at risk of homelessness

A member of the Committee proposed \$2 million of total funding for two programs: \$1 million would support the Student Homelessness Prevention Program within the Department of Education, which awards \$750 grants through McKinney-Vento liaisons in Maine schools to students and families that are at risk of becoming homeless. This program began as a pilot in 2023 and was made permanent but only partially funded last session through LD 384.

Another \$1 million would support the Maine State Housing Authority/DOE collaborative program that awarded grants to Maine schools to hire homeless prevention and housing navigation specialists.

The Committee's vote on this initiative was **IN: 10-1**.

III. Proposal to opt in to the federal Education Freedom Tax Credit

A member of the Committee proposed to include in the supplemental budget language to opt the State of Maine into the newly-formed Education Freedom Tax Credit program. The Education Freedom Tax Credit is a federal tax credit that allows taxpayers to receive a tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donations made to Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs). The SGOs then use donated funds to award scholarships to students to attend a school of their choice or for other education-related expenses. While the tax credit is available across the country, the federal law requires states to opt in.

The Committee's vote on this initiative was **OUT: 5-6**.

Sec. A-5. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MAINE

Maine Community College System - Board of Trustees 0556

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 680

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	(\$153,752)	(\$224,076)
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	(\$153,752)	(\$224,076)

Justification:

Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

MCCS Free Community College - Two Enrollment Years Z335

Initiative: Provides funding for the State's 7 community colleges to continue offering student scholarships through the State's free community college tuition program.

Ref. #: 682

One Time

Committee Vote: IN 7-4 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$0

Notes:

See also part QQQ.

Justification:

This initiative provides funding to continue the Maine Free College scholarship to eligible high school graduates and those completing their GED/HiSET enrolled at the seven community colleges.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MAINE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
GENERAL FUND	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$0
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	(\$153,752)	(\$224,076)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$2,346,248	(\$224,076)

Sec. A-10. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Climate Education Professional Development Pilot Program Fund Z361

Initiative: Continues one State Education Representative position, previously established by Resolve 2021, chapter 178, through June 19, 2027 and provides funding for related All Other costs. This initiative also transfers the position from the Climate Education Professional Development Pilot Program Fund program, Other Special Revenue Funds to the Office of Innovation program, General Fund and reduces All Other allocations in the Climate Education Professional Development Pilot Program Fund program, Other Special Revenue Funds.

Ref. #: 201 One Time Committee Vote: IN 10-1 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	(\$12,185)
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$8,784)
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$20,969)

Justification:

Public Law 2021, chapter 178 provided funding to support a climate education grant program, including a limited-period position to develop and execute the grant program, as well as design environmental literacy resources and training that align with all content areas in pre-k through grade 12 public education. This initiative continues the position to continue supporting interdisciplinary climate education and help prepare students to enter careers that support sustainability and climate resilience.

Education in Unorganized Territory 0220

Initiative: Transfers one seasonal part-time Teacher Aide position from the Federal Expenditures Fund to the General Fund within the same program and reorganizes the position to a seasonal part-time Education Technician II position. This initiative also provides All Other funding in the Federal Expenditures Fund to maintain the allocation.

Ref. #: 164 Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - FTE COUNT	0.000	0.000	0.707
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$42,145
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$42,145

Ref. #: 165 Committee Vote: IN 7-4 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - FTE COUNT	0.000	0.000	(0.707)
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	(\$38,385)
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$38,385
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0

Justification:

Kingman Elementary School has a house on its property, historically used to house regular and itinerant staff. The house has been unoccupied for several years and now requires upgrades to make it habitable. The current teacher shortage, coupled with the school's remote location and the lack of other housing, makes school-provided housing attractive to candidates seeking to work at the school. The school currently has an employee who will require housing. The house renovation involves mold remediation and upgrades to its water, heating, and sewer systems. The completion of the renovation work provides opportunities for the long-term sustainability of the school in Kingman Township.

Education in Unorganized Territory 0220

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to update outdoor play areas in 3 state-owned schools in the Unorganized Territory.

Ref. #: 169 One Time Committee Vote: IN 7-3 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$185,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$185,000	\$0

Justification:

An assessment of outdoor play areas at 3 state-owned schools in the Unorganized Territory identified deficiencies in meeting current safety standards as outlined by the Department of Education. Additional safety standards apply in school year 2025-26 with the inclusion of pre-kindergarten students in all three schools. This initiative provides one-time funding to update outdoor play areas to meet current safety standards.

Education in Unorganized Territory 0220

Initiative: Provides funding to establish an allocation to properly record child nutrition expenditures.

Ref. #: 170 Committee Vote: IN 6-5 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$320,000	\$320,000
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$320,000	\$320,000

Justification:

Education in the Unorganized Territory (EUT) receives funding from the Department of Education's Child Nutrition program. The Child Nutrition team oversees several United States Department of Agriculture food and nutrition services programs and initiatives that provide healthy and nutritious food to children attending schools in the state, including students in the EUT. This initiative will allow the EUT to properly record revenue and expenses for child nutrition services.

Education in Unorganized Territory 0220

Initiative: Provides funding for the annual purchase of one school bus to maintain an updated fleet of school buses.

Ref. #: 171 Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$130,000	\$130,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$130,000	\$130,000

Justification:

Education in the Unorganized Territory (EUT) has a fleet of 19 school buses that are used to transport students in the Unorganized Territory (UT). The EUT is not eligible to participate in the Maine School Bus Purchase Program, therefore funding for new bus purchases and maintenance is the fully funded by UT taxpayers. This initiative provides capital funding to purchase one new school bus annually or to fund significant repair necessary to ensure that no bus in the EUT fleet exceeds 20 years of service or is retired from service prematurely.

Federal Programs Team Z081

Initiative: Reduces funding for an annual contract with the Maine Education Policy Research Institute.

Ref. #: 184

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$250,000)
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$250,000)

Justification:

This initiative reduces funding for the annual cost of a contract between the Maine Legislative Council and the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to perform targeted research as directed by the chairs of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. Funding for this work will shift from the department to the University of Maine System.

Federal Programs Team Z081

Initiative: Continues one limited-period State Education Representative position previously continued by Public Law 2025, chapter 388 through June 30, 2027 and provides funding for related All Other costs and grant activities.

Ref. #: 185

One Time

Committee Vote: IN 8-1 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$61,953
All Other	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$869,684
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$931,637

Notes:

May need to adjust end date of position to June 19, 2027.

Justification:

The Department of Education received a one-year preschool development grant in December 2025. The grant objective is to ensure children and their families will receive the services they need through an efficient, data-driven and evidenced-based system so that all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. This initiative provides funding for

grant activities and continues the position for a six month period after the end of the grant to allow for grant close-out activities.

Federal Programs Team Z081

Initiative: Transfers one Education Specialist III position, related All Other costs and program administration costs from the Federal Expenditures Fund to Other Special Revenue Funds within the same program.

Ref. #: 186

Committee Vote: IN 10-0 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0,000	0.000	(1,000)
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	(\$129,575)
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$42,256)
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$171,831)

Ref. #: 187

Committee Vote: IN 9-1 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1,000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$129,575
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$42,256
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$171,831

Justification:

This position serves as the liaison between the department and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) which administers the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other student assessments. This position is also responsible for analyzing and reporting the data of each assessment and its comparative relationship to NAEP and the respective state assessment. Participation in NAEP is mandatory in order for school administrative units to receive Title I funds.

Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services Z005

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected resources as funding is no longer available.

Ref. #: 178

Committee Vote: IN 10-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	(\$500)	(\$500)
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	(\$500)	(\$500)

Notes:

See also Parts HH and NN.

Justification:

Allocation is no longer needed as this program has ended.

General Purpose Aid for Local Schools 0308

Initiative: Continues and makes permanent one limited-period Education Specialist II position previously established by Financial Order 004467 F6 and reduces All Other to fund the position.

Ref. #: 173

Committee Vote: IN 7-3 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$109,827
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$109,827)
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0

Justification:

This position serves as a Data Quality Trainer (DQT) to develop and implement professional development training and materials for school administrative units regarding student and staff level data collections. The DQT supports data collection and reporting systems in order to meet state and federal reporting requirements and to facilitate the collection of timely, accurate and complete data. This statewide data impacts funding, helps identify areas where increased support may be needed and informs policy decisions.

General Purpose Aid for Local Schools 0308

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 174

Committee Vote: IN 10-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	(\$1,200,982)	(\$2,011,360)
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	(\$1,200,982)	(\$2,011,360)

Justification:

Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

General Purpose Aid for Local Schools 0308

Initiative: Continues and makes permanent one limited-period Agency Procurement and Program Administrator position previously established by Financial Order 004466 F6 and reduces All Other to fund the position.

Ref. #: 175

Committee Vote: IN 7-3 AFA Vote: _____

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$128,674
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$128,674)
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0

Justification:

This position supports complex technology procurement work. This position provides procurement support to department staff requesting technology services and goods and works and consults with Maine IT, the department's Data Team and Procurement Team to ensure policy adherence and streamlined flow for document approval. The position participates on and leads Request for Proposal (RFP) writing teams and RFP evaluation teams and writes contracts and other procurement documents.

General Purpose Aid for Local Schools 0308

Initiative: Provides funding to maintain the statutory requirement of funding the state share of the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 at 55%.

Ref. #: 176

Committee Vote: IN 10-0 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$45,966,181
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$45,966,181

Justification:

Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15671, subsection 1 requires funding the state share percentage of the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 at 55%. This amount represents the increased cost from fiscal year 2025-26 to maintain funding the state share percentage at 55%.

Innovative Teaching and Learning Z394

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force recommendations, provides one-time funding to expand the department's artificial intelligence guidance toolkit and to provide grants to school administrative units, nonprofits, universities and professional organizations that provide professional development or planning to educators related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 203

One Time

Committee Vote: AMD 6-4 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$500,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$500,000

Justification:

Provides one-time funding to expand the Department of Education's Artificial Intelligence Guidance Toolkit and to provide grants to school administrative units, non-profits, universities, or professional organizations which provide professional development or planning to educators related to artificial intelligence.

Innovative Teaching and Learning Z394

Initiative: Continues and makes permanent one limited-period State Education Representative position previously continued by Financial Order 004383 F6 and provides funding for related All Other costs.

Ref. #: 203

Committee Vote: 5-5

AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$152,199
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$9,328
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$161,527

Justification:

The teaching of Maine Native Studies is mandated by Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4706. State educators require targeted support to be able to implement Wabanaki Studies in their classrooms and the development of materials must be done in conjunction with Wabanaki Tribal Nations. This position ensures the effective implementation of Wabanaki Studies in Maine classrooms and the relationship management necessary to ensure quality materials are developed with and supported by Wabanaki Tribal Nations. The position was previously funded by financial order in the Learning Through Technology program, General Fund.

Learning Through Technology Z029

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for school administrative units to support costs associated with prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices during the school day.

Ref. #: 180

One Time

Committee Vote: ING-5

AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$700,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$700,000

Notes:

See also Part GG directing the Department of Education, in coordination with the Maine School Management Association, to develop a model policy available to school boards prohibiting use of personal electronic devices during the school day.

Justification:

This initiative provides funding to reimburse school administrative units for the costs associated with a cell phone ban.

Maine School Safety Center Z293

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

Initiative: Establishes one Public Service Coordinator I position and provides funding for related All Other costs.

Ref. #: 193

Committee Vote: IN 7-4 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	1.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$30,111	\$129,995
All Other	\$0	\$2,765	\$9,328
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$32,876	\$139,323

Justification:

This position is established to strengthen pupil transportation safety statewide. In response to recent school bus accidents, this role would coordinate standardized safety training for school bus drivers, provide bus safety education for school staff, families, and students, and collaborate with the Transportation Coordinator to develop statewide training standards. The position would also establish an ongoing certification program beyond initial licensing, including minimum annual training requirements, to reinforce best practices and reduce preventable risks while broader recommendations are under development.

Office of Innovation Z333

Initiative: Continues one State Education Representative position, previously established by Resolve 2021, chapter 178, through June 19, 2027 and provides funding for related All Other costs. This initiative also transfers the position from the Climate Education Professional Development Pilot Program Fund program, Other Special Revenue Funds to the Office of Innovation program, General Fund and reduces All Other allocations in the Climate Education Professional Development Pilot Program Fund program, Other Special Revenue Funds.

Ref. #: 196

One Time

Committee Vote: IN 8-3 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$152,199
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$9,328
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$161,527

Justification:

Public Law 2021, chapter 178 provided funding to support a climate education grant program, including a limited-period position to develop and execute the grant program, as well as design environmental literacy resources and training that align with all content areas in pre-k through grade 12 public education. This initiative continues the position to continue supporting interdisciplinary climate education and help prepare students to enter careers that support sustainability and climate resilience.

Office of Workforce Development and Innovative Pathways Z334

Initiative: Provides funding for the Maine Career Pathways program to provide participants with opportunities to complete certifications and credentials to meet the workforce needs of employers and their local and regional economies.

Ref. #: 198

Committee Vote: IN 8-4 AFA Vote: _____

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$250,000
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$250,000

Justification:

Maine Career Pathways is a collaboration of multiple state agencies, higher education institutions, and nonprofits seeking to provide career opportunities for secondary students and adult learners. Career pathways programming offers education and training to meet the needs of the local job market by providing an intentional plan for high-value and in-demand occupations. The proposed pathways include healthcare, early childhood education, energy and infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing, which are cited in the Maine economic development strategy. These pathways are created through collaborations and partnerships with: high schools, career and technical education schools, adult education programs, postsecondary institutions, and industry representatives. These pathways intend to provide participants with opportunities to complete certifications and credentials to meet the workforce needs of employers and their local and regional economies.

This initiative relates to LAB F-A-7125.

Office of Workforce Development and Innovative Pathways Z334

Initiative: Adjusts funding for debt service costs associated with the bonding authority granted in Public Law 2021, chapter 635, Part X for career and technical education centers and regions. This initiative also provides one-time funding for the overhead costs of 2 limited-period positions supporting career and technical education bonds.

Ref. #: 199

Committee Vote:

IN 8-4

AFA Vote:

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	(\$1,117,457)	\$124,462
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	(\$1,117,457)	\$124,462

Justification:

Public Law 2021, chapter 635, Part X authorized the issuance of securities for equipment purchases to career and technical education centers and career and technical education regions. Pursuant to section 6 of this Part, debt service costs for bonds issued to career and technical education centers and regions must be paid by the State. This initiative adjusts funding for the debt service costs of these bonds. This initiative provides funding for the overhead costs of two positions continued through June 30, 2027 that direct, coordinate and oversee program funds.

School and Student Supports Z270

Initiative: Provides funding for the approved reclassification of one Public Service Manager II position from range 30 to range 32 retroactive to December 29, 2023.

Ref. #: 189

Committee Vote:

IN 8-4

AFA Vote:

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Personal Services	\$0	\$30,883	\$17,816
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$30,883	\$17,816

Notes:

Not Part of the Public Hearing. Policy Committees need not make a recommendation on approved Reclassification, Reorganization and Range Change initiatives.

Justification:

This position helps students with disabilities meet their individualized education plans and navigate life after high school, achieve post-secondary education, career opportunities or other goals. Activities include employment, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing adult education, independent living, and/or community participation. This position's scope of work has broadened, evolving into strategic leadership and acting as a liaison by building and securing stakeholders and partnerships across the state to support this work.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
GENERAL FUND	\$0	(\$564,033)	\$47,818,986
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	\$0	\$1,013,992	\$768,908
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	(\$881,482)	(\$1,131,314)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	(\$431,523)	\$47,456,580

Sec. A-11. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, STATE BOARD OF

State Board of Education 0614

Initiative: Provides a baseline allocation to allow for the expenditure of funds in the event private grant funding is received.

Ref. #: 161

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$500	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$500	\$500

Justification:

This initiative establishes a baseline allocation for receipt of private grant funds. This allocation will enable the State Board of Education to actively seek and receive private grant funding to support their work.

EDUCATION, STATE BOARD OF

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	\$500	\$500
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$500	\$500

Sec. A-22. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

LIBRARY, MAINE STATE

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Transfers funding for a contract for the Executive Director of Maine InfoNet's salary from the Maine State Library program, Federal Expenditures Fund to the Statewide Library Information System program, General Fund.

Ref. #: 582

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$118,559)
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$118,559)

Justification:

This initiative transfers funding for the contract for the Executive Director of Maine InfoNet's salary from the Maine State Library program, Federal Expenditures Fund to Statewide Library Information System program, General Fund. This position is funded through a shared contract with the University of Maine and the Maine State Library. Maine InfoNet, a nonprofit entity is founded by the University of Maine and the Maine State Library for managing online catalog systems and MaineCat, the statewide union catalog crucial for inter-library loans and delivery services. Due to the lack of a federal fiscal year 2026 IMLS LSTA grant, this transfer of funding ensures the Maine State Library's continued funding for this position that supervises five staff members.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Transfers one Library Section Supervisor position and related All Other costs from Federal Expenditures Fund to General Fund within the same program.

Ref. #: 583

Committee Vote: IN 7-4 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$146,035
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$6,065
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$152,100

Ref. #: 584

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	(1.000)
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	(\$146,035)
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$6,065)
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$152,100)

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$4,853)
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$32,746)

Ref. #: 588

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$27,893
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$4,853
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$32,746

Justification:

This initiative transfers one Interlibrary Loan Coordinator position from 70% Federal Expenditures Fund and 30% General Fund to 100% General Fund, one part-time Customer Representative Assistant II position from General Fund to Federal Expenditures Fund, and one Librarian - Specialized Services position from 50% General Fund, 50% Federal Expenditures Fund to 100% Federal Expenditures Fund to align positions with funding source. All transfers are within the same program. This initiative also transfers the funding for the associated All Other costs.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Transfers funding from the Statewide Library Information System program to the Maine State Library program within the same fund.

Ref. #: 590

Committee Vote: IN 8-3 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$35,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$35,000

Justification:

This initiative transfers All Other funding from the Statewide Library Information System program to the Maine State Library program within the same fund.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, provides one-time funding to design a program to promote a public literacy and safety program related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 591

One Time

Committee Vote: AMD 6-5 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$250,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$250,000

Justification:

This initiative provides one-time funding for supporting AI in the Maine State Library.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, provides one-time funding for media and outreach to promote a public literacy and safety program related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 592 One Time Committee Vote: AMD 6-5 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$500,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$500,000

Justification:

This initiative provides one-time funding for supporting AI in the Maine State Library.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, provides one-time funding for competitive grants to deploy and implement a public literacy and safety program related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 593 One Time Committee Vote: AMD 6-5 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$500,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$500,000

Justification:

This initiative provides one-time funding for supporting AI programs across the State of Maine public libraries.

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, provides one-time funding for grants to public libraries for trainings, hardware, and other needs related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 594 One Time Committee Vote: AMD 6-5 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000

GENERAL FUND TOTAL

\$0 \$0 \$1,000,000

Justification:

This initiative provides one-time funding for supporting AI projects across the State of Maine public libraries.

Statewide Library Information System 0185

Initiative: Transfers funding for a contract for the Executive Director of Maine InfoNet's salary from the Maine State Library program, Federal Expenditures Fund to the Statewide Library Information System program, General Fund.

Ref. #: 579

Committee Vote: IN 7-4 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$118,559
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$118,559

Justification:

This initiative transfers funding for the contract for the Executive Director of Maine InfoNet's salary from the Maine State Library program, Federal Expenditures Fund to Statewide Library Information System program, General Fund. This position is funded through a shared contract with the University of Maine and the Maine State Library. Maine InfoNet, a nonprofit entity is founded by the University of Maine and the Maine State Library for managing online catalog systems and MaineCat, the statewide union catalog crucial for inter-library loans and delivery services. Due to the lack of a federal fiscal year 2026 IMLS LSTA grant, this transfer of funding ensures the Maine State Library's continued funding for this position that supervises five staff members.

Statewide Library Information System 0185

Initiative: Transfers funding from the Statewide Library Information System program to the Maine State Library program within the same fund.

Ref. #: 580

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	(\$35,000)
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	(\$35,000)

Justification:

This initiative transfers All Other funding from the Statewide Library Information System program to the Maine State Library program within the same fund.

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

LIBRARY, MAINE STATE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
GENERAL FUND	\$0	\$0	\$2,627,576
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	\$0	\$0	(\$377,576)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$0	\$2,250,000

Sec. A-25. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

MARITIME ACADEMY, MAINE

Maine Maritime Academy Scholarship Fund - Casino Z167

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 623

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	(\$10,085)	(\$13,454)
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	(\$10,085)	(\$13,454)

Justification:

Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

MARITIME ACADEMY, MAINE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	(\$10,085)	(\$13,454)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	(\$10,085)	(\$13,454)

Sec. A-27. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION, MAINE

Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation 0033

Initiative: Provides funding for the Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation in delivering broadcast and emergency alert services on the State's public television and radio network.

Ref. #: 632

Committee Vote: IN 8-3

AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000

Justification:

Maine Revised Statues, Title 20-A, section 852, subsection 3, states: "An annual appropriation for operating, constructing, equipping, maintaining, improving and replacing facilities of the corporation must be made in amounts sufficient to ensure delivery of broadcast sources throughout the State."

The requested amount is for Maine Public to maintain infrastructure used for broadcast services and the State's Emergency Alert System (EAS). Maine Public's infrastructure serves as the backbone of the State's Emergency Alert System in partnership with MEMA. Public Law 2025, chapter 459 awarded an additional \$250,000 each year for fiscal year 2025-26 and 2026-27 that will fund a portion of increased infrastructure electricity costs. The \$400,000 requested Supplemental amount will help fund the remaining portion. Overall, the total amount requested represents an increase over last year's appropriation but is significantly less than the documented expense of providing these emergency services. The request would put the appropriation at the level of funding in fiscal year 2011-12 which was 14 years ago.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION, MAINE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
GENERAL FUND	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000

Sec. A-32. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE

Educational and General Activities - UMS 0031

Initiative: Provides funding for an annual contract with the Maine Education Policy Research Institute.

Ref. #: 692

Committee Vote: IN 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$250,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$250,000

Justification:

This initiative provides funding for the annual cost of a contract between the Maine Legislative Council and the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to perform targeted research as directed by the chairs of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. Funding for this work will shift from the Department of Education to the University of Maine System.

Educational and General Activities - UMS 0031

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to support commercially promising faculty, staff and student research at the University of Maine System in emerging areas of state and national interest and economic opportunity.

Ref. #: 693

One Time

Committee Vote: IN 10-1 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0

Justification:

Consistent with the State's economic strategy, AI task force recommendations, and other State and sector plans, would provide one-time funding to support University of Maine System researchers and graduate students to undertake research and obtain competitive federal grants and other funding to prepare the scientific and technical workforce for Maine's future and develop tools and technologies that advance Maine innovation and industries in emerging areas of state and national interest, including, but not limited to, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, life sciences, robotics, and rural health care delivery.

Maine Economic Improvement Fund 0986

Initiative: Pursuant to the Governor's Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, provides ongoing funding to establish a state artificial intelligence public innovation hub to partner with state agencies, local governments and higher education institutions in identifying, evaluating, designing, and deploying digital innovation projects related to artificial intelligence.

Ref. #: 695

Committee Vote: AMD 10-1 AFA Vote: _____

GENERAL FUND	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$0	\$400,000

LD 2212 - EDU REPORT BACK

GENERAL FUND TOTAL

\$0 \$0 \$400,000

Justification:

Provides ongoing funding to establish the Maine AI Public Innovation Hub to partner with state agencies, local governments, and other higher education institutions in identifying, evaluating, designing, and deploying digital innovation projects related to artificial intelligence.

University of Maine Scholarship Fund Z011

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 697

Committee Vote: IN 10 - 1 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

2024-25 2025-26 2026-27

All Other

\$0 (\$234,145) (\$306,923)

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL

\$0 (\$234,145) (\$306,923)

Justification:

This initiative reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS

2024-25 2025-26 2026-27

GENERAL FUND

\$0 \$2,000,000 \$650,000

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

\$0 (\$234,145) (\$306,923)

DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS

\$0 \$1,765,855 \$343,077

Sec. T-11. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Maine School Safety Center Z293

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for safety measures including retrofitting nearly 1,700 Maine school buses with crossing arms and anti-pinch door sensors.

Ref. #: 194

Committee Vote: IN 12-0 AFA Vote: _____

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$5,921,640	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$5,921,640	\$500

Justification:

This initiative provides funding to cover retrofitting nearly 1,700 buses owned by Maine school districts which are not currently equipped with either or both safety measures and that can be retrofitted. It also covers privately owned school buses that school administrative units contract with to provide student transportation. For approximately 80 percent of Maine students, the school day begins and ends with a ride on the school bus. These students are entitled to safe, secure transportation to and from school. Retrofitting of crossing arms and anti-pinch door sensors on school buses will ensure that our families and students feel safer when they head to class every day.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	\$5,921,640	\$500
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$5,921,640	\$500

Language Parts

Part C (see pg: 27)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 9-2</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part T (see pg: 32)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part FF (see pg: 33)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part GG (see pg: 34)	Committee Vote: <u>AMD 7-4</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part HH (see pg: 34)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 10-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part II (see pg: 35)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 10-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part JJ (see pg: 35)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 7-4</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part KK (see pg: 36)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part LL (see pg: 37)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part MM (see pg: 37)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part NN (see pg: 37)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 10-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part OO (see pg: 38)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 11-0</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part PP (see pg: 38)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 6-5</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part QQ (see pg: 39)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 7-4</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part KKK (see pg: 40)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 7-4</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part QQQ (see pg: 40)	Committee Vote: <u>IN 7-4</u>	AFA Vote: _____
Part SSS (see pg: 41)	Committee Vote: <u>AMD 8-3</u>	AFA Vote: _____

PART C

Sec. C-1. Mill expectation. The mill expectation pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15671-A, for fiscal year 2026-27 is 5.645.

Sec. C-2. Total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12. The total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 for fiscal year 2026-27 is as follows:

	2026-27 TOTAL
Total Operating Allocation	
Total operating allocation pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15683	\$1,687,739,449
Total operating allocation for public charter schools pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15683-B	40,404,647
Total adjustments to state subsidy pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, included in subsidizable costs and total other subsidizable costs pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15681-A	\$770,551,816
Total Operating Allocation and Subsidizable Costs	
Total operating allocation pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15683, and total other subsidizable costs pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15681-A	\$2,498,695,912
Total Debt Service Allocation	
Total debt service allocation pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15683-A	\$4,479,686
Total Adjustments and Targeted Education Funds	
Adjustments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689	\$0

Audit adjustments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 4	
Educating students in long-term drug treatment center adjustments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 5	\$249,607
Minimum teacher salary adjustment pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 7-A	\$0
Regionalization, consolidation, and efficiency assistance adjustments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 9	\$6,506,869
Maine Care seed payments adjustments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 14	\$3,000,000
Special Education Hardship adjustment pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 15	\$100,000
English Learner budgetary hardship adjustment pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689, subsection 16	\$500,000
Total adjustments to the state share of total allocation pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689	\$10,356,476
Targeted Education Funds pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A	
Special education costs for state agency clients and state wards pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 1	\$26,250,000
Essential programs and services components contract pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 3	\$300,000
Data management and support services for essential programs and services pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 10	\$10,750,000

Postsecondary course payments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 11	\$5,500,000
National board certification salary supplement pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 12	\$0
Learning through technology program pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 12-A	\$14,000,000
Jobs for Maine's Graduates, including college pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 13	\$3,881,379
Maine School of Science and Mathematics, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 14	\$3,615,347
Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 15	\$9,758,979
Transportation administration pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 16	\$300,000
Special education for juvenile offenders pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 17	\$420,326
Comprehensive early college programs funding (bridge year program) pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 23	\$1,000,000
Community schools pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 25	\$250,000
Instruments and Professional Development in rural schools pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 28	\$50,000
Construction Aid – State Funds Principal Payments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 29	\$91,916,877

Construction Aid – State Funds Interest Payments pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 29	\$30,682,975
Adult Education for unenrolled 16-20 year olds pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A, subsection 30	\$4,000,000
Total targeted education funds pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15689-A	\$202,675,883
Enhancing student performance and opportunity pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A and section 15672, subsection 1-D	
Career and technical education costs pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A, subsection 1	\$82,351,963
College transitions programs through adult education college readiness programs pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A, subsection 2	\$450,000
National industry standards for career and technical education pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A, subsection 6	\$2,000,000
Career and technical education middle school grant program pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688, subsection 8	\$500,000
Career and technical education, early childhood education program expansion support pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A, subsection 10	\$100,000
Total enhancing student performance and opportunity pursuant to Title 20-A, section 15688-A and section 15672, subsection 1-D	\$85,401,963
Total Cost of Funding Public Education from Kindergarten to Grade 12	

Total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 for the fiscal year pursuant to Title 20-A, chapter 606-B, not including normal retirement costs	\$2,801,609,920
Total normal cost of teacher retirement	\$69,763,590
Total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 for the fiscal year pursuant to Title 20-A, chapter 606-B, including normal retirement costs	\$2,871,373,510
Total cost of state contribution to unfunded actuarial liabilities of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System that are attributable to teachers, retired teacher health insurance, and retired teacher life insurance for fiscal year 2025-26 pursuant to Title 5, chapters 421 and 423, excluding the normal cost of teacher retirement	\$292,083,135
Total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12, plus state contributions to the unfunded actuarial liabilities of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System that are attributable to teachers, retired teacher health insurance, and retired teacher life insurance for fiscal year 2025-26 pursuant to Title 5, chapters 421 and 423	\$3,163,456,645

Sec. C-3. Local and state contributions to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12. The local contribution and the state contribution appropriation provided for general-purpose aid for local schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, is calculated as follows:

	2026-27	2026-27
	LOCAL	STATE
Local and State Contributions to the Total Cost of Funding Public Education from Kindergarten to Grade 12		
Local and state contributions to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15683, subject to statewide distributions required by law	\$1,292,118,080	\$1,579,255,430

<p>State contribution to the total cost of unfunded actuarial liabilities of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System that are attributable to teachers, teacher retirement health insurance, and teacher retirement life insurance for fiscal year 2026-27, pursuant to Title 5, chapters 421 and 423, excluding the normal cost of teacher retirement</p>	<p>\$292,083,135</p>
---	----------------------

<p>State contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12, plus state contribution to the total cost of unfunded actuarial liabilities of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System that are attributable to teachers, teacher retirement health insurance, and teacher retirement life insurance pursuant to Title 5, chapters 421 and 423</p>	<p>\$1,871,338,565</p>
--	------------------------

Sec. C-4. Authorization of payments. If the State's continued obligation for any individual component contained in those sections of this Act that set the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 and the local and state contributions for that purpose exceeds the level of funding provided for that component, any unexpended balances occurring in other programs may be applied to avoid proration of payments for any individual component. Any unexpended balances from this Act may not lapse but must be carried forward for the same purpose.

Sec. C-5. Limit of State's obligation. Those sections of this Act that set the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 and the local and state contributions for that purpose may not be construed to require the State to provide payments that exceed the appropriation of funds for general purpose aid for local schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.

**PART C
SUMMARY**

This Part establishes the Total Cost of Education from Kindergarten to Grade 12, the state contribution, the annual target state share percentage, and the mill expectation for the local contribution for fiscal year 2026-2027.

PART T

Sec. T-9. Maine School Safety Center program, Other Special Revenue Funds account established. The State Controller shall establish within the Department of Education the nonlapsing Maine School Safety Center program, Other Special Revenue Funds account, which is funded through a transfer from the available balance of the Budget Stabilization Fund pursuant to section T-10 below.

Sec. T-10. Transfer from Budget Stabilization Fund; Maine School Safety Center program. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before June 30, 2026, the State Controller shall transfer \$5,921,640 from the Budget Stabilization Fund within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to the Department of Education, Maine School Safety Center program, Other Special Revenue Funds account.

Sec. T-11. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Maine School Safety Center Z293

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for safety measures including retrofitting Maine school buses with crossing arms and anti-pinch door sensors. This funding will cover nearly 1,700 buses owned by Maine school districts that are not currently equipped with either or both safety measures and that can be retrofitted.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2025-2026	2026-2027
All Other	\$5,921,640	\$500
	_____	_____
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$5,921,640	\$500

**PART T
SUMMARY**

This part authorizes the State Controller to transfer funding from the Budget Stabilization Fund to implement a program to provide a one-time Affordability Payment to eligible recipients; implement a program to provide one-time funding to Maine school districts for school bus safety measures including retrofitting buses with crossing arms and anti-pinch door sensors; provide one-time funding for technology and compliance with new federal legislation, pursuant to H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act, PL 119-21; provide one-time funding to create affordable home ownership and rentals for low-income households across the state; and provide one-time funds for a three-year pilot project to provide regionalized building code enforcement.

PART FF

Sec. FF-1. 20-A MRS §253, sub-§10 is enacted to read:

10. Support funding for educational programs and opportunities. The commissioner may raise and expend private funds to support specific educational programs and opportunities.

**PART FF
SUMMARY**

This Part authorizes the receipt and expenditure of private funds to support educational programs.

PART GG

Sec. GG-1. 20-A MRSA §1001, sub-§23, as enacted by PL 2025, c. 210, §1, is amended to read:

23. Cellular telephone policy. By August 1, 2026, a school board shall adopt and implement a policy ~~related to prohibiting~~ use of personal electronic devices during the school day. The policy must include, but is not limited to, provisions related to ~~student use of~~ cellular telephones and wearable electronic devices with Internet or cellular network connectivity capabilities. The Department of Education, in coordination with the Maine School Management Association, shall make available a model policy to school boards. This model policy shall include a definition of school day and necessary exceptions for a student's individual health plan (IHP), implementation of a student's individualized education program (IEP), a documented Section 504 accommodation for an individual student or in emergency situations as authorized by staff.

**PART GG
SUMMARY**

This Part directs the Department of Education, in coordination with the Maine School Management Association, to develop a model policy available to school boards prohibiting use of personal electronic devices during the school day.

PART HH

Sec. HH-1. 20-A MRSA §2651, as amended by PL 2019, c. 70, §§1,2, is repealed.

**PART HH
SUMMARY**

This Part repeals the entirety of chapter 114-A related to the creation, uses and sources of funding for the Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services.

PART II

Sec. II-1. 20-A MRSA §5201, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §11, is further amended to read:

1. Eligibility to enroll; school year. A person meeting the minimum age requirements of subsection 2 or section 7001, subsection 1-B, paragraph B, and who has not reached 20~~2~~ years of age before the start of the school year may enroll as a full-time or, with the consent of the school board, as a part-time student, in the public elementary and secondary schools where the student resides as defined in section 5202. The school year, for the purpose of this subsection, is defined as starting on July 1st and ending on the following June 30th.

**PART II
SUMMARY**

This Part increases the minimum age requirements for enrollment from a person who has not yet reached 20 years of age before the start of a school year to a person who has not yet reached 22 years of age before the start of a school year.

PART JJ

Sec. JJ-1. 20-A MRSA §7304, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. W, §20, is amended to read:

1. Fund established. The Preschool Special Education Program Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a nonlapsing fund within the department to provide funding for general education and special education and related services for children eligible under Part B, Section 619. The department shall distribute funds through a quarterly allocation.

2. Eligibility requirements. Beginning in fiscal year 2024-25, school administrative units that have assumed responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 are eligible to receive allocations from the fund.

3. Purposes. Allocations from the fund may be made to school administrative units that have assumed the responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for special education and related services pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 as outlined in each child's individualized education program ~~and for general education costs for children eligible under Part B, Section 619~~ including general education costs incurred in the provision of special education services to children eligible under Part B, Section 619, when such general education programming is not offered to all students. The commissioner may pay costs attributed to professional and administrative staff support to implement the requirements of this section.

4. If a school administrative unit has unexpended preschool funds at the end of the fiscal year, these funds must be carried forward in the school administrative unit preschool fund account and used to reduce the net preschool expenses in the next fiscal year.

PART JJ SUMMARY

This Part includes costs attributed to professional and administrative staff support to implement the requirements of this section as an allowable use of the fund. It also clarifies that a school administrative unit's unexpended funds in this program at the end of a fiscal year shall be carried forward for the same purpose.

PART KK

Sec. KK-1. 20-A MRSA §15674, sub-§1, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 504, Pt. A, §6, is repealed.

Sec. KK-2. 20-A MRSA §8605, sub-§2, ¶B as amended by PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. D, §29 is repealed.

Sec. KK-3. 20-A MRSA §8605, sub-§2, ¶C as amended by PL 1991, c. 518, §37, is repealed.

Sec. KK-4. 20-A MRSA §15689-A, sub-§30 is enacted to read:

30. Adult Education. The commissioner may expend and disburse funds for adult education students in accordance with the provisions of chapter 315.

PART KK SUMMARY

This Part moves the funding to support 16 – 20 year olds that are no longer enrolled in public education from the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding calculation to the Adult Education program where these students are taking courses to attain high school equivalency diplomas. The current method of providing funding within the EPS calculation does not guarantee that funds are used to support the intended student population, nor does it require that the allocation go to the SAU operating the adult education services. This change will better align with current statute, improve accuracy, simplify reporting, provide better equity, and increase the impact of funding intended for those students no longer enrolled in public education.

PART LL

Sec. LL-1. 20-A MRSA §13013-A, sub-§1, ¶D, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 394, §1, is amended to read:

D. For fiscal year ~~2026-27~~ ~~2020-21~~ and succeeding years, for a teacher who is employed in a school in which at least 50% of students qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch under chapter 223, subchapter 7 or at least 50% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged for subsidy purposes under chapter 606-B, whichever is higher, during the year that the supplement is provided, \$5,000.

**PART LL
SUMMARY**

This Part adds an alternate data set to determine teacher eligibility based on the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged for subsidy purposes under chapter 606-B.

PART MM

Sec. MM-1. 20-A MRSA §15672, sub-§2-A, ¶A, as amended by PL 2013, c. 167, Pt. B, §1 is repealed.

Sec. MM-2. 20-A MRSA §15689-A, sub-§29 is enacted to read:

29. Debt Service. The commissioner shall pay principal and interest costs for approved major capital projects in the allocation year, excluding payments made with funds from state and local government accounts established under the federal Internal Revenue Code and regulations for disposition of excess, unneeded proceeds of bonds issued for a school project and excluding any principal and interest costs attributable to a school closed for lack of need pursuant to chapter 202.

**PART MM
SUMMARY**

This Part moves principal and interest costs for approved major capital projects from payment within the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding calculation to payment as targeted education funds. This allows the EPS funding calculation for each school administrative unit (SAU) to be determined prior to inclusion of debt service costs and attributes debt service costs only to those SAUs with approved major capital projects.

PART NN

Sec. NN-1. 20-A MRSA §15689-A, sub-§21, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. C, §11, is repealed.

**PART NN
SUMMARY**

This Part repeals the subsection of the authorization of payment of targeted education funds related to the Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services.

PART OO

Sec. OO-1. Carrying Provision; Department of Education, Special Services Team. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the balance in the Department of Education, Special Services Team program, General Fund account may not lapse and must be carried forward for its original purpose.

**PART OO
SUMMARY**

This Part changes the Department of Education, Special Services Team program, General Fund account to a nonlapsing account to allow the balance to carry forward for its original purpose.

PART PP

Sec. PP-1. Transfer; Department of Education, General Purpose Aid for Local Schools and Child Development Services. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before June 30, 2026, the State Controller shall transfer \$12,600,000 of the unencumbered balance forward from the Department of Education, General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program, General Fund account, All Other line category to the Department of Education, Child Development Services program, Other Special Revenue Funds account, All Other line category.

Sec. PP-2. Transfer; Department of Education, General Purpose Aid for Local Schools and Child Development Services. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before June 30, 2026, the State Controller shall transfer \$4,051,457 of the unencumbered balance forward from the Department of Education, General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program, General Fund account, All Other line category to the Department of Education, Child Development Services program, General Fund account, All Other line category

**PART PP
SUMMARY**

This Part authorizes the transfer of \$16,651,457 in unencumbered balance forward from the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program to the Child Development Services program within the Department of Education.

PART QQ

Sec. QQ-1. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Education. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer up to \$37,000 and for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer up to \$37,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the School Finance and Operations program for the purpose of funding maintenance and licensing costs for an internet-based application for free or reduced-priced meals. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. QQ-2. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Education. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer up to \$177,129 and for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer up to \$185,985, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Leadership Team program for the purpose of funding annual hosting and maintenance costs for the department's grant management system. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. QQ-3. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Education. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer up to \$12,500, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Adult Education program for the purpose of funding rising costs related to the adult education data system. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

**PART QQ
SUMMARY**

This Part authorizes the Department of Education to transfer Personal Services to the All Other line category in order to fund maintenance and licensing costs for an internet-based application for free or reduced-priced meals, annual hosting and maintenance costs for the department's grant management system and rising costs related to the adult education data system.

PART KKK

Sec. KKK-1. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Maine State Library. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2026-27, the Maine State Library is authorized to transfer up to \$20,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Maine State Library program for the purpose of funding new signage to comply with accessibility codes. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

**PART KKK
SUMMARY**

This Part authorizes the Maine State Library to transfer Personal Services to the All Other line category in order to fund new signage to comply with accessibility codes.

PART QQQ

Sec. QQQ-1. 20-A MRSA §12723, as enacted by PL 2021, c.372 §1, is repealed.

Sec. QQQ-2. 20-A MRSA §12724 is enacted to read:

§12724 Maine Free Community College Program

The Maine Community College shall waive tuition for eligible students. The availability of the waiver is limited to the amount appropriated.

Eligibility. For purposes of this Part, an eligible student is a high school graduate, or a person who obtains the equivalent of a high school diploma in the previous two academic years.

Conditions. In order to receive 2 years of free community college, an eligible student must:

- A. Pursue an associate degree or academic credential;
- B. Have established a primary residence in the State for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the date of admission and reside in the State for the duration of that enrollment;
- C. Accept all available federal and state grants, scholarships and other sources of funding;
and
- D. Access the free college waiver for no longer than 150% of the stated completion time for the program of study.

Report. The Maine Community College System shall prepare a report by January 15th of each year to be submitted to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and over appropriations and financial affairs.

**PART QQQ
SUMMARY**

This Part repeals outdated language related to tuition waivers and codifies and makes permanent the Maine Free Community College Program.

PART SSS

Sec. SSS-1. 20-A MRSA §13408 is enacted to read:

§13408. Minimum salaries beginning in 2027-2028 school year

1. School year 2027-2028. For the school year starting after June 30, 2027, and in each subsequent school year, the minimum salary for certified teachers and career and technical education teachers is \$45,000; and
2. School year 2028-2029. For the school year starting after June 30, 2028, the minimum salary for certified teachers and career and technical education teachers is \$47,500; and
3. School years beginning in or after 2029. For the school year starting after June 30, 2029, and in each subsequent school year, the minimum salary for certified teachers and career and technical education teachers is \$50,000.

A school administrative unit shall provide to the department annually on or before October 1st the number of certified teachers and career and technical education teachers eligible for incremental salary increases as defined in section 15689, subsection 7-A, paragraph A.

**PART SSS
SUMMARY**

This Part identifies annual increases in minimum teacher salaries beginning in the 2027-2028 school year until the minimum salary for certified teachers and career and technical education teachers reaches \$50,000.