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An Act Regarding Education Laws

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

PART A

Sec. A-1. 20-A MRSA §401-A, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 395, Pt. A, §47, is amended to read:

§ 401-A. Responsibilities of the State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is intended to act as a body with certain policy-making, administrative and advisory functions. In those capacities, the board has the primary responsibility for the following:

1. Formulating policy. Formulating policy by which the commissioner shall administer certain regulatory tasks;

2. Advising commissioner. Advising the commissioner in the administration of all the mandated responsibilities of that position; and

3. Enforcing regulatory requirements. Enforcing regulatory requirements for school administrative units.

The state board may advise the commissioner and the Legislature on matters concerning state laws relating to public preschool to grade 12 and postsecondary education.

Sec. A-2. 20-A MRSA §5401, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

1. Municipal school units. The superintendent of schools in a municipal school unit shall, with the approval of the school board, provide transportation for elementary school students and public preschool students a part of or the whole distance to and from the nearest suitable elementary school. The municipality may provide transportation for secondary level students.

Sec. A-3. 20-A MRSA §5401, sub-§2, ¶A, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

A. Elementary school students and public preschool students a part of or the whole distance to and from the nearest suitable school; and

Sec. A-4. 20-A MRSA §5401, sub-§3, ¶A, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

A. Instruct the superintendent of schools to provide transportation for elementary and secondary school students and public preschool students all or a part of the way to and from the nearest suitable school; or

Sec. A-5. 20-A MRSA c. 407, as amended, is repealed.

Sec. A-6. 20-A MRSA §10701, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

2. Degree. "Degree" means a document of achievement at the associate level or higher conferred by a ~~post-secondary~~postsecondary educational institution authorized to confer that degree in its home state. It includes educational, academic, literary ~~or~~and professional degrees. It also includes associate, baccalaureate, ~~masters or~~master's and doctoral degrees and certificates of advanced graduate studies.

Sec. A-7. 20-A MRSA §10701, sub-§3, as amended by PL 1991, c. 563, §3 and PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 and affected by §4, is further amended to read:

3. Educational institution. "Educational institution" means any person, partnership, board, association, institution or corporation other than the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy that offers academic, educational, literary or professional courses or programs.

Sec. A-8. 20-A MRSA §10702, as amended by PL 1987, c. 395, Pt. A, §81, is further amended to read:

§ 10702. Use of name "community college," "college" or "university"

An educational institution may use the term "~~junior~~community college," "college" or "university" in connection with its operation or use any other name, title or descriptive matter ~~which~~that might tend to indicate that it is an institution of higher learning with the authority to confer degrees, only if it:

1. Temporary approval. Is operating under a license or certificate of temporary approval from the state board in accordance with section 10703; or

2. Authorization. Has authorization to confer degrees in accordance with sections 10704 and 10704-A.

Sec. A-9. 20-A MRSA §10703, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

§ 10703. Temporary approval to use the name "community college," "college" or "university"

1. Power. The state board may grant an applicant a certificate of temporary approval, permitting use of the term "~~junior~~community college," "college" or "university" in its name until the earlier of:

A. The expiration of the academic year; or

B. The applicant is authorized by the Legislature to grant degrees in accordance with section 10704.

2. Extensions and renewals. The state board may extend or renew a certificate of temporary approval for not more than 2 years.

Sec. A-10. 20-A MRSA §10705, as amended by PL 1987, c. 395, Pt. A, §84, is further amended to read:

§ 10705. Courses for credit

An educational institution may offer courses or programs for academic credit leading to degree-completion requirements only if:

- 1. Authority.** It has been authorized under sections 10704 and 10704-A to grant degrees;
- 2. State board authority.** It has been given temporary authority by the state board to use the name "juniorcommunity college," "college" or "university"; "university"; or
- 3. Out-of-state institution.** It is:
 - A. Located in another state outside the State; and
 - B. Authorized by the state board to offer courses for academic credit leading to degree-completion requirements.

~~An educational institution may offer courses or programs for academic credit if it offers coordinated courses or programs in conformity with section 10706.~~

Sec. A-11. 20-A MRSA §10706, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

§ 10706. Coordinated programs

An educational institution may offer ~~courses or~~ programs for academic credit which ~~that~~ are coordinated with a Maine degree-granting educational institution and which ~~that~~ have been approved by the state board.

Sec. A-12. 20-A MRSA §10707, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

2. Temporary use of name. Applications for temporary state board authority to use the name "juniorcommunity college," "college" or "university" ~~shall~~ must be made to the state board on forms provided by the commissioner.

Sec. A-13. 20-A MRSA §10712, last ¶, as enacted by PL 1991, c. 563, §4, is amended to read:

Upon termination of its degree-granting authority pursuant to this section, an educational institution may apply to the state board pursuant to section 10703 for a certificate of temporary approval to use the term "juniorcommunity college," "college" or "university" in its name.

Sec. A-14. 20-A MRSA §10713, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1991, c. 563, §4, is amended to read:

1. Investigations. Whenever the state board believes that an event, transaction or condition within the scope of section 10712 may have occurred or may exist, it may conduct an investigation, which may include, but is not limited to, an examination of the educational institution by a visiting committee convened by the state board for that purpose. As part of an investigation conducted under this subsection, the state board has the power to subpoena and examine under oath educational institutions, their trustees, directors, officers and employees, lenders, creditors and investors, together with their records, books and accounts. ~~Any member of the state board may sign investigative subpoenas and administer oaths to witnesses.~~ The state board may also require the educational institution to provide other written information relevant to the subject matter of the investigation in the format prescribed by the state board. The Superior Court has jurisdiction upon complaint filed by the state board to enforce any subpoena or request for other written information issued under this subsection.

Sec. A-15. 22 MRSA §1971, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2007, c. 1, Pt. D, §3, is further amended to read:

1. Establishment. The position of school nurse consultant is established jointly within the department and the Department of Education. The Director of the ~~Bureau of Health~~Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Policy Director of Special Services within the Department of Education shall jointly supervise the school nurse consultant.

PART B

Sec. B-1. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§1, ¶B, as amended by PL 2007, c. 307, §1, is further amended to read:

~~B. During the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008, the~~The department, in a manner consistent with the authority of the board of directors of an intermediate educational unit, shall approve the annual entitlement plan and the budget for an intermediate educational unit pursuant to subsection 6 only in accordance with the following.

(1) The department shall approve the entitlement plan and the budget if the provisions of the entitlement plan and the budget are in compliance with the statewide standards established by the state intermediate educational unit pursuant to subsection 3 for the purpose of ensuring coordinated service delivery in each region of the State.

(2) In the event that the department determines that the provisions of the annual entitlement plan and the budget presented by a board of directors of an intermediate educational unit are not in compliance with the statewide standards established pursuant to subsection 3, the department shall require the board of directors of the intermediate educational unit to revise and resubmit the annual entitlement plan and the budget in a reasonable amount of time as determined by the commissioner.

(3) In the event the provisions of the resubmitted annual entitlement plan and the budget are not in compliance with the statewide standards established pursuant to subsection 3, the department is authorized to determine and approve an appropriate, final annual entitlement plan and a budget for the intermediate educational unit that is in compliance with the statewide standards established pursuant to subsection 3.

~~This paragraph is repealed June 30, 2008.~~

Sec. B-2. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2007, c. 307, §2, is further amended to read:

2. State-level advisory committee. The state-level advisory committee is established ~~for the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008~~ to advise on the provisions of this section. Members of the state-level advisory committee are appointed by the commissioner and must include representatives from each board of directors of a regional site described in subsection 5, the early childhood education consultant and the director of early childhood special education within the department. ~~This subsection is repealed June 30, 2008.~~

Sec. B-3. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§3, as amended by PL 2007, c. 307, §3, is further amended to read:

3. State intermediate educational unit. The commissioner shall establish and supervise the state intermediate educational unit. The state intermediate educational unit is established as a body corporate and politic and as a public instrumentality of the State for the purpose of conducting child find activities as provided in 20 United States Code, Section 1412 (a) (3) for children from birth to under 6 years of age, ensuring the provision of early intervention services for eligible children from birth to under 3 years of age and ensuring a free, appropriate public education for eligible children at least 3 years of age and under 6 years of age. ~~For the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008, the~~The state intermediate educational unit shall perform the following statewide coordination and administration functions:

A. Establish standard policies and procedures for a statewide salary and benefits administration system, including personnel classifications, position descriptions and salary ranges, and a standard package of health, retirement and other fringe benefits for Child Development Services System personnel, which must be included in the annual entitlement plan described in subsection 1 beginning in fiscal year 2006-07;

B. Develop a statewide salary and benefits administration system and perform the payroll functions for Child Development Services System personnel;

B-1. Bargain collectively under Title 26, chapter 9-A if the employees of the regional sites choose to be represented by an agent for purposes of collective bargaining. In such circumstances, the state intermediate educational unit must be considered the public employer for purposes of collective bargaining;

- C. Establish a centralized system for statewide fiscal administration to be implemented by September 1, 2006. The state intermediate educational unit shall establish internal controls and implement accounting policies and procedures in accordance with standards set forth by the State Controller;
- D. Develop and implement a centralized data management system to be fully operational beginning July 1, 2007;
- E. Establish a standard, statewide template for regional site contracts with therapeutic service providers, including policies and procedures for the review of contracts, that must be included in the annual entitlement plan described in subsection 1, beginning in fiscal year 2006-07;
- F. Refine program accountability standards for compliance with federal mandates that must be included in the annual entitlement plan described in subsection 1, including the development of a performance review system to monitor and improve regional site performance through the use of efficiency ratings aligned with the accountability standards and through a compliance plan that requires the regional site to address the unmet needs of eligible children in accordance with specific targets and time frames;
- G. Design and implement a statewide plan to provide professional development and training to Child Development Services System personnel;
- H. Employ professional and other personnel, including those necessary to ensure the implementation of the centralized fiscal and data management systems. All state intermediate educational unit employees are employees for the purposes of the Maine Tort Claims Act;
- I. Enter into contracts, leases and agreements and any other instruments and arrangements that are necessary, incidental or convenient to the performance of its duties and the execution of its powers under this chapter.

Sec. B-4. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§7, ¶C, as amended by PL 2007, c. 307, §6, is further amended to read:

- C. Ensure data entry and reporting ~~through June 30, 2008~~; and

SUMMARY

Part A of this bill accomplishes the following.

It amends the school transportation statutes to clarify that public preschool students are included in the group of elementary students for whom school administrative units are required to provide transportation.

It makes several changes in the postsecondary educational institution statutes, including adding the certification of advanced studies to the list of degrees that may be conferred by postsecondary educational institutions, updating references to "junior college" to "community college," adding the Maine Maritime Academy to the list of public institutions not included in the definition of "educational institution" and

clarifying the postsecondary degree-granting approval process and the State Board of Education's role in that process.

It specifically authorizes the State Board of Education to advise the Commissioner of Education and the Legislature on matters pertaining to education in elementary and secondary schools and post-secondary educational institutions.

It repeals the statutory provisions relating to the Maine State Commission for Higher Education Facilities, whose duties were assumed by the Maine Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority.

It clarifies that the school nurse consultant within the Department of Education is jointly supervised by the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Policy Director of Special Services within the Department of Education.

Part B of this bill eliminates the sunsets on the transition periods and makes the centralization of the fiscal, data and human resources of the Child Development Services System permanent to achieve a more efficient and effective Child Development Services System delivery and governance system.