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Resolve, To Increase Physical Education for Elementary School Students

Sec. 1 Convening of a team to develop and implement a plan for improving physical education in elementary schools. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Health and Human Services and the cochairs of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, Health and Wellness shall invite interested parties to serve on a planning and oversight team to be known as "PE4ME." PE4ME must include individuals and representatives of agencies and associations with expertise in health, health promotion, elementary education and teacher certification in physical education.

1. First meeting; subcommittees and staff support. The commissioners and cochairs of the council shall convene the first meeting of PE4ME no later than 30 days after the effective date of this resolve. PE4ME may create subcommittees and seek assistance from outside the team membership in addressing its charge and meeting its responsibilities. The commissioners shall provide staff and technical assistance to PE4ME within existing resources.

2. Duties. PE4ME shall examine national guidelines for physical education for students in kindergarten to grade 8. PE4ME shall develop recommendations for each grade level including the minimum number of minutes of physical education per day or week and appropriate physical activities. PE4ME shall develop a timeline for implementing its recommendations and explore federal and private funding available to supplement state resources. The implementation timeline must include clear benchmarks for phasing in the recommendations, with a goal of complete implementation by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

3. Considerations. PE4ME shall examine the capacity within the State to train and certify physical education teachers. PE4ME shall review the system of learning results established pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 6209 regarding physical education and propose changes if needed to improve physical education. PE4ME shall develop an approach to including physical education funding as part of the essential programs and services funding model. PE4ME shall develop consistent measures for evaluating physical education programs and consider the need for alternative standards for small, rural or isolated schools based on a potential hardship or additional time needed to comply with the recommended standards.

4. Reports. PE4ME shall report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than December 31, 2007. The report must present the recommendations of PE4ME and a detailed implementation plan. Following the initial report, the Commissioner of Education shall provide the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over education matters with updates on the progress of implementing the plan at least once every 6 months until the plan is completely implemented; and be it further

Sec. 2 Legislation authorized. Resolved: That the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may submit legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature regarding physical education for elementary school students.