



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1474

H.P. 966

House of Representatives, April 3, 2025

An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative OSHER of Orono.
Cosponsored by Senator TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland and
Representatives: BECK of South Portland, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Speaker
FECTEAU of Biddeford, MITCHELL of Cumberland, SATO of Gorham, Senators: President
DAUGHTRY of Cumberland, HICKMAN of Kennebec, MOORE of Washington.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §14** is enacted to read:

3 **§14. Wabanaki studies specialist**

4 The Wabanaki studies specialist, referred to in this section as "the specialist," is
5 established in the department to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in the parameters
6 for essential instruction and graduation requirements as required by section 4706,
7 subsection 4.

8 **1. Duties.** The specialist, in consultation with the contracted Wabanaki advisors, shall:

9 A. Assist school administrative units and educators in the exploration of a wide range
10 of educational materials and resources relating to Wabanaki studies;

11 B. Identify materials and resources for implementing the instruction of Wabanaki
12 studies;

13 C. Involve organizations and individuals able and willing to assist with the
14 requirements under this subsection, including, but not limited to, museums and
15 educators; and

16 D. Make recommendations to the department regarding:

17 (1) Wabanaki studies curricula;

18 (2) Funding the instruction of Wabanaki studies in school administrative units;

19 (3) Wabanaki studies courses that count toward the requirements of teacher
20 certification; and

21 (4) Implementation of teacher education programs and summer teacher institutes.

22 **2. Reporting.** The specialist shall annually report to the commissioner and the Maine
23 Indian Tribal-State Commission regarding the implementation of the instruction of
24 Wabanaki studies as required by section 4706, subsection 4 and regarding:

25 A. Educational materials and resources that are appropriate to assist school
26 administrative units and educators in the State to include Wabanaki studies as required
27 by section 4706, subsection 4; and

28 B. Opportunities for professional development, training and technical assistance that
29 must be provided to assist school administrative units and educators in the State in
30 implementing Wabanaki studies as required by section 4706, subsection 4.

31 The department shall provide ongoing funding for the work of the specialist as well as
32 contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation of Wabanaki studies across
33 the State as required by section 4706, subsection 4, including funding that school
34 administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources.

35 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §4706, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 247, §1 and affected
36 by §3, is further amended to read:

37 Instruction in American history, African American studies, government, citizenship,
38 Maine studies ~~and~~, the history of genocide and Wabanaki studies must be aligned with the
39 parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements established under section
40 6209.

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TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN WABANAKI STUDIES

§13961. Teacher education programs

The department shall provide funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors and educators to work with the Wabanaki studies specialist pursuant to section 14 to create and implement short-term courses that must be made available to all teachers throughout the State. The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the position of Wabanaki studies specialist in the Department of Education to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in the parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements and requires the department to provide ongoing funding for the work of the specialist as well as contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation of the instruction of Wabanaki studies across the State, including funding that school administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources. The bill also directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies component in the qualifications for certifying teachers and requires the department to provide funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors and educators to work with the Wabanaki studies specialist to create and implement short-term courses that must be made available to all teachers throughout the State.