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An Act To Adopt the Common Core State Standards Initiative

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, national education reform includes the so-called "Common Core State Standards Initiative" standards for kindergarten to grade 12, which are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and

Whereas, Maine's current system of learning results established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20A, section 6209, and its system of assessment, do not include the Common Core State Standards Initiative standards; and

Whereas, immediate enactment of this legislation is necessary to ensure the State's eligibility to apply for a significant amount of federal funding for continued education reform, which is jeopardized by significant and continuing reductions in state funding for education; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6209, first ¶, as corrected by RR 2007, c. 1, §8, is amended to read:

The department in consultation with the state board shall establish and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of learning results, which may include a core of standards in English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten to grade 12 established in common with the other states, as set forth in this section and in department rules implementing this section and other curricular requirements. The department must establish accountability standards at all grade levels in the areas of mathematics; reading; and science and technology. The department shall establish parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements in English language arts; mathematics; science and technology; social studies; career and education development; visual and performing arts; health, physical education and wellness; and world languages. Only students in a public school or a private school approved for tuition that enrolls at least 60% publicly funded students, as determined by the previous school year's October and April average enrollment, are required to participate in the system of learning results set forth in this section and in department rules implementing this section and other curricular requirements. The commissioner shall develop accommodation provisions for instances where course content conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of a student's parent or guardian. The system must be adapted to accommodate children with disabilities as defined in section 7001, subsection 1-A.

Sec. 2. Emergency rulemaking. In accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 8054, the Commissioner of Education may adopt emergency rules to include in the statewide system of learning results and assessment a core of standards in English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten to grade 12 established in common with the other states.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

