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An Act Related to Public Funding of Charter Schools

CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to amend several funding requirements for public charter schools established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 112. The bill proposes that:

1. The Department of Education establish a new program budget account for funding the operation of public charter schools. Under current law, local school administrative units must provide funding for students who reside within the school administrative unit but who enroll in a public charter school. This bill proposes to require that the Commissioner of Education recommend an annual amount of state funding for students enrolled in public charter schools, but that funding that supports student enrollment or the operation of public charter schools may not come from state or local resources allocated through the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program;

2. The amount of state funding provided by the Department of Education for a student enrolled in a public charter school may not exceed the combined level of federal, state and local per-pupil funding that would have been provided for the student had the student remained in attendance in the student's local school. Public charter schools may not discriminate among potential students who wish to attend the school based upon the combined level of federal, state and local per-pupil funding that would follow the student from the student's sending school administrative unit;

3. Virtual public charter schools may not receive state or local funding, except that state and local resources allocated through the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program must be provided by the sending school administrative unit to the virtual public charter school for a student who experiences education disruption as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 5161, subsection 9 and who enrolls in a virtual public charter school; and

4. School administrative units not be responsible for the transportation costs for a student who resides within the school administrative unit but who enrolls in a public charter school, and school administrative units not be responsible for providing transportation for students who are enrolled in a public charter school and who also attend a career and technical education program that is supported by public funds raised by the school administrative unit. Public charter school students may access transportation to the career and technical education program only from a noncharter public secondary school or another location where career and technical education students gather to access transportation to the career and technical education program.