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## **Resolve, To Create a State-run Virtual Academy Providing Maine Students with Access to Online Learning through Their Existing School Districts**

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

**Whereas,** it is crucial the Department of Education begin its work as soon as possible to ensure the department has sufficient time to obtain information and develop plans regarding the establishment of a state-run virtual academy; 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

**Sec. 1 State-run virtual academy. Resolved:** That the Department of Education shall establish a state-administered virtual academy providing all public schools in the State access to online courses for their students. The department shall design the virtual academy in collaboration with associations representing school administrators, teachers, school boards and others involved in public education. In designing the virtual academy, the department shall:

1. Ensure the virtual academy provides for a blended learning environment that offers access to virtual classes along with traditional classroom-based instruction;
2. Place particular emphasis on enhancing curriculum and addressing potential scheduling obstacles, including scheduling obstacles that may be encountered by students in career and technical education programs; and
3. Use as models the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative and the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School in New Hampshire.

The department shall complete the design of the virtual academy by August 1, 2015, and the virtual academy must be operational by August 1, 2016; and be it further

**Sec. 2 Legislation. Resolved:** That, by December 1, 2015, the Department of Education shall submit any necessary legislation to implement section 1 of this resolve to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters; and be it further

**Sec. 3 Moratorium. Resolved:** That the Maine Charter School Commission, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 10-D, may not authorize a virtual public charter school and a local school board may not authorize a public charter school within its jurisdiction that integrates online and on-site instruction until after a state-administered virtual academy established by the Department of Education pursuant to section 1 is operational.

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

## **SUMMARY**

This resolve directs the Department of Education to establish a virtual academy administered by the State providing all public schools in the State access to online courses for their students and to submit implementing legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. It also imposes a moratorium on the authorization of virtual public charter schools and public charter schools that integrate online and on-site instruction until after the virtual academy administered by the State is operational.