

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Create Community Schools**

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

**Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 333** is enacted to read:

### **CHAPTER 333**

### **COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

#### **§ 9921. Definitions**

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

**1. Community partner.** "Community partner" means a provider of one or more of the following services to students, families or community members:

- A. Primary medical or dental care;
- B. Nurse home visitation services;
- C. Mental health treatment and counseling services;
- D. Developmentally appropriate physical education activities;
- E. Academic enrichment activities;
- F. Specialized instructional support services;
- G. Teacher home visits;
- H. Programs designed to improve student attendance at school, including programs that provide assistance to students who are truant or who have been suspended or expelled;
- I. Mentoring and other youth development programs, including peer mentoring and conflict mediation;
- J. Community service and service-learning opportunities;
- K. Early childhood education;
- L. Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy;
- M. Parenting education activities;
- N. Parenting leadership development activities;

- O. Child care services;
- P. Youth and adult job training, internship opportunities and career counseling services;
- Q. Nutrition education;
- R. Adult education, including instruction in English as a second language;
- S. Remedial education and enrichment activities, including expanded learning time;
- T. Summer or after-school enrichment and learning experiences;
- U. Legal services;
- V. Juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation programs;
- W. Homelessness prevention services; or
- X. Any appropriate services and programs authorized by a community school that are consistent with the services and programs specified in paragraphs A to W.

**2. Community school.** "Community school" means a public elementary or secondary school that:

- A. Participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and
- B. Provides access to services under paragraph A to students, families and the community, such as access during the school year to services before school hours, after school hours and during the weekend, as well as access to such services during the summer.

## **§ 9922. Establishment of a community school**

Beginning October 1, 2015, a school board may designate an existing school or establish a new school as a community school.

**1. Community school plan goals.** A community school shall collaborate with community partners to provide services to students, families and community members that promote student success while addressing the needs of the whole student. A school board may designate or establish a community school as long as the community school plan developed by the school board is consistent with the following goals:

- A. Improving student learning and development by providing support for students to enable them to graduate college-ready and career-ready;

B. Improving the coordination and integration, accessibility and effectiveness of services for children and families, particularly for students attending high-poverty schools, including high-poverty rural schools;

C. Enabling educators and school personnel to complement and enrich efforts to improve academic achievement and other results related to student learning and development;

D. Ensuring that children have the physical, social and emotional well-being to come to school ready to engage in the learning process every day;

E. Promoting and enabling family and community engagement in the education of children;

F. Enabling more efficient use of federal, state, local and private sector resources that serve children and families;

G. Facilitating the coordination and integration of programs and services operated by community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations and state, local and tribal governments;

H. Engaging students as resources for their communities; and

I. Engaging the business community and other community organizations as partners.

**2. Audit.** Following the designation or establishment of a community school, but prior to the opening of a community school, a school board shall conduct:

A. A community needs audit to identify the academic, physical, social, emotional, health, mental health and civic needs of students and their families that may affect student learning and academic achievement;

B. A community resource assessment of potential resources, services and opportunities available within or near the community that students, families and community members may access and integrate into the community school; and

C. For an existing school that has been designated as a community school, an operations and instructional audit.

**3. Plan.** A school board shall develop a community school plan for each school designated or established as a community school.

A. When developing a community school plan for the establishment of a new community school, the school board shall use the results of the community resource assessment under subsection 2, paragraph B to address the specific needs identified in the community needs audit under subsection 2, paragraph A.

B. When developing a community school plan for the designation of an existing school as a community school, the school board shall use the results of the community resource assessment under subsection 2, paragraph B to address the specific needs identified in the community needs audit under subsection 2, paragraph A and the operations and instructional audit under subsection 2, paragraph C.

C. A community school plan must coordinate, integrate and enhance services for students, families and community members at the community school to improve the academic achievement of students and increase family and community involvement in education.

D. A community school plan must include cost estimates or an operational budget for the specified educational, developmental, family, health and other comprehensive services to be provided by the community school.

E. When developing a community school plan for the establishment of a new community school, a school board shall designate a community school coordinator to manage the partnerships with community partners participating in the community school plan.

**4. Funding.** The commissioner may provide state funding to the school administrative units in which community schools are located pursuant to section 15689-A, subsection 25. In providing funds under this subsection, the commissioner shall give priority to a qualified school administrative unit in which at least 40% of the students are economically disadvantaged students as determined pursuant to section 15675, subsection 2 and that has more economically disadvantaged students than other qualified school administrative units under this subsection.

**5. Gifts, grants and donations.** A school administrative unit may seek and accept public and private gifts, grants and donations to offset the costs of developing and implementing a community school plan under subsection 3. A gift, grant or donation received pursuant to this subsection must be approved by the school board prior to the receipt of the gift, grant or donation.

**6. School board report.** A school board that has established a community school shall at the conclusion of each school year submit a report to the department, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, regarding the community school. The report must:

A. Include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the community school in providing services to students, families and community members, including, but not limited to, whether the implementation of the community school plan under subsection 3 has improved student academic achievement and increased family and community involvement in education;

B. Measure the development and implementation of partnerships with community partners;

C. Provide information regarding the degree of communication between schools and families, neighborhood safety, school climate, the degree of parental participation in school activities, student health, student civic participation, the number of students, families and community members receiving services at the community school and any other information that is relevant to evaluating the community school; and

D. Analyze, as appropriate, how student learning and academic achievement, graduation rates, attendance rates, school readiness, the number of suspensions and expulsions and graduate enrollment in institutions of higher education have been affected by the coordination of services at the community school.

**7. Commissioner's report.** Not later than January 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall submit a report on community schools to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The annual report must include an evaluation of the community schools in operation during the prior school year and provide information regarding:

A. State and federal barriers to implementation and effective coordination of services at the community schools;

B. The extent of coordination between state agencies providing services at the community schools; and

C. The efficiency and adequacy of local and state programs and policies with respect to student and family services provided at the community schools.

### **§ 9923. Pilot project for community schools**

The department is authorized to designate 5 community schools established in accordance with this chapter as part of a 5-year pilot project beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. The commissioner shall provide state funding to the school administrative units in which the designated community schools are located and may employ a state community school coordinator to implement this pilot project. Annual state allocations for this pilot project may not exceed \$250,000.

This section is repealed July 1, 2021.

**Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §15689-A, sub-§25** is enacted to read:

**25. Community schools.** The commissioner may expend and disburse funds for the establishment of community schools in accordance with the provisions of chapter 333.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill authorizes a school board to designate an existing school or establish a new school to be a community school that participates with community partners to provide various educational and social services to students, families and community members. The bill provides the steps a school board must complete in order to establish a new community school, including conducting a community needs audit, conducting a community resource assessment and developing a community school plan, and requires that a school board that designates an existing school as a community school must also conduct a school operations and instructional audit.

The bill requires a school board that establishes a community school to report annually to the Department of Education on the school's progress and provides that the Commissioner of Education must submit an annual report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over

education matters that includes an evaluation of the community schools in operation during the prior school year. The bill also authorizes the Department of Education to provide funding, including funds allocated for a 5-year pilot project beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, to support the implementation of community schools.