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An Act To Establish Regional School Leadership Academies

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §2601, sub-§2, ¶B, as amended by PL 2015, c. 251, §1, is further amended to read:

B. Agreements for shared staff or staff training, including collaborative programs and support services for preservice and in-service staff training;

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §2651, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2015, c. 251, §4, is further amended to read:

2. Use of fund. The department shall award grants from the fund to school administrative units, municipalities, counties and groups of 2 or more such entities, including such groups that have entered into a collaborative agreement pursuant to chapter 114, to fund the costs of implementing changes in governance, administrative structures or policies that result in the creation of consolidated school administrative units; purchasing alliances; innovative, autonomous public schools, teacher-led schools, innovative public school districts or innovative public school zones; regional delivery of collaborative programs and educational services; regional school leadership academies; or collaborations of municipal-school service delivery or support systems, with the purpose of improving educational opportunity and student achievement. Grants must be used to implement changes that will be sustained by the school administrative unit, municipality or county without the need for additional grants from the fund or other sources.

Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA c. 502-C is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 502-C

REGIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMIES

§ 13111. Definitions

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

1. Collaborative agreement. "Collaborative agreement" means an agreement as defined in section 2601, subsection 2, paragraph B between 2 or more school administrative units to form a collaborative partnership that specifies each school administrative unit's responsibility for and cost of the delivery of certain administrative, instructional and noninstructional functions, including collaborative programs and support services, for preservice and in-service staff training for school principalship and other school leadership positions over a 3-year period.

2. Collaborative board. "Collaborative board" means a board created pursuant to section 13112, subsection 2. A collaborative board is composed of one representative from each of the:

- A. School administrative units participating in the collaborative partnership;
- B. Statewide education associations cooperating with the collaborative partnership; and
- C. Educator preparation programs cooperating with the collaborative partnership.

3. Collaborative partnership. "Collaborative partnership" means a regional school leadership academy collaborative partnership formed pursuant to this chapter between 2 or more school administrative units and, whenever possible, with educator preparation programs and statewide education associations that provides cohort-based professional development and career pathways, including preservice training for prospective candidates for school principalship and other school leadership positions and in-service training for new employees in school principalship and other school leadership positions.

4. Educator preparation program. "Educator preparation program" means an educator preparation program as defined in section 13008, subsection 1, paragraph A.

5. Regional school leadership academy. "Regional school leadership academy" or "academy" means a professional development consortium formed by a collaborative partnership that combines state and local programs and resources, including the preparation, licensure, certification, professional development and training for educational leadership, into a coherent system that can significantly improve the recruitment and preparation of prospective candidates for school principalship and other school leadership positions, as well as the induction, mentoring and retention of principals and school leaders during the first 2 years of employment in their school leadership positions.

6. Statewide education association. "Statewide education association" means a nonprofit education association or corporation in the State, including a principals' association, a school superintendents' association, a school boards' association and an association of administrators of services for children with disabilities.

§ 13112. Establishment

Beginning July 1, 2018, a regional school leadership academy may be established under a collaborative agreement.

1. Regional school leadership academy mission. The mission of an academy is to enhance the quality of the preservice and in-service staff training programs for school principalship and other school leadership positions, to improve the distribution, supply and quality of school leadership personnel in underserved school administrative units in the State and to develop appropriate professional development pathways at participating schools in the academy. To fulfill its mission, the academy shall work in coordination with educational leadership mentors and coaches and with high-performing educational leaders employed within the collaborative partnership.

2. Development of collaborative agreements; establishment of collaborative board. School administrative units may work in cooperation with educator preparation programs and statewide education associations to design a plan for a collaborative agreement that achieves efficiencies and reduces costs in the delivery of programs and support services for preservice and in-service staff training for educators, principals and other school leaders. School administrative units that work in cooperation with educator preparation programs and statewide education associations to design a plan for a collaborative agreement shall establish a collaborative board. A collaborative board is the governing body of a regional school leadership academy. The plan for the collaborative agreement must be consistent with the following goals:

A. Improving student learning and development by providing preparation, training and support for educators, principals and other school leaders that enable students in their schools to graduate ready for college and careers;

B. Identifying and recruiting prospective candidates for school principalship and school leadership positions;

C. Improving recruitment strategies, including contracting with a marketing or branding firm to build recruitment strategies that coach school administrators how to make effective proposals to prospective candidates that would entice them to consider becoming a principal or school leader;

D. Establishing and maintaining long-term partnerships with school administrative units in the region that create and maintain a skilled and adaptable principalship and school leadership preparation program;

E. Enhancing the recruitment, preservice training, education and preparation opportunities for educators in this State to allow them to prepare for future principal and school leadership positions in schools in the State;

F. Providing educators in this State who seek to upgrade their education, skills and credentials in order to facilitate their career advancement and enhance their job security;

G. Establishing, at a minimum, 2 years of programming to support the implementation of school leadership induction and mentoring programs that promote excellence in school leadership, improve classroom instruction, enhance student achievement, build a supportive environment within school administrative units, increase the retention of promising school leaders and promote the personal and professional well-being of school leaders;

H. Creating and promoting a selection process for mentors that enhances the support for beginning principals and other school leaders; and

I. Creating a budget to provide resources for the academy's programs, collaborative organizational structures and program evaluation and a plan for the academy's sustainability.

3. Approval. The collaborative agreement plan under subsection 2 must be approved by the collaborative board before the collaborative agreement becomes effective.

4. State assistance. The department and the state board may provide the following services and resources to assist school administrative units that form a regional school leadership academy:

A. Guidance to help school administrative units create the supports and conditions to promote professional development of their own leadership;

B. Facilitation of partnerships between state education policy officials from the department and the state board and education leadership professionals, educator preparation programs and statewide education associations to enhance the promotion of collaborative partnerships; and

C. Assistance and resources to regional school leadership academies to encourage teachers and educators to become candidates for school leadership positions; to provide pathways for aspiring candidates to explore, study, practice and take on leadership roles in their schools; and to employ mentors and coaches to provide training for newly hired school principals and school leaders that improves their awareness of standards-based instruction and learning and develops their leadership skills. Beginning in fiscal year 2018-19, the department shall consider providing the following resources:

(1) Awarding state grant funds from the Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services pursuant to chapter 114-A for academies that apply and qualify for such grants; and

(2) Allocating state funding pursuant to section 15688-A, subsection 8 to school administrative units that form a regional school leadership academy.

5. Gifts, grants and donations. School administrative units that enter into a collaborative agreement to form a regional school leadership academy may seek and accept public and private gifts, grants and donations to offset the costs of developing and implementing the plan for the regional school leadership academy. A gift, grant or donation received pursuant to this subsection must be approved prior to the receipt of the gift, grant or donation by the school boards for the school administrative units that enter into the collaborative agreement.

§ 13113. Report

A regional school leadership academy shall provide to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters an annual report that includes information regarding the regional school leadership academy, including the name and location of the academy; the number of educators trained, mentored and coached; the dollar amount expended; and, if applicable, the number of educators who were employed as school leaders.

Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §15688-A, sub-§8 is enacted to read:

8. Regional school leadership academy. Beginning in fiscal year 2018-19, the commissioner may expend and disburse funds to support the establishment of regional school leadership academies pursuant to chapter 502-C.

SUMMARY

This bill allows school administrative units to enter into collaborative agreements to establish regional school leadership academies that combine state and local programs and resources, including the preparation, licensure, certification, professional development and training for educational leadership, into a coherent system that can significantly improve the recruitment and preparation of prospective candidates for school principalship and other school leadership positions, as well as the induction, mentoring and retention of principals and school leaders during the first 2 years of employment in their school leadership positions.