



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1769

H.P. 1133

House of Representatives, April 25, 2023

**An Act Concerning Students Who Experience Educational
Disruption Due to Temporary or Permanent Changes Where They
Live**

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ROBERTS of South Berwick.
Cosponsored by Senator RAFFERTY of York and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, MURPHY of Scarborough,
SARGENT of York.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §5055** is enacted to read:

3 **§5055. Keeping Maine Children Connected Program Manager**

4 **1. Position established.** The Keeping Maine Children Connected Program Manager,
5 referred to in this section as "the manager," is established within the department to carry
6 out responsibilities specified in this section.

7 **2. Duties.** The manager shall develop, train and maintain a statewide network of
8 appropriate liaisons, referred to in this section as "the liaison network," to assist children
9 experiencing disruption, including, but not limited to, homelessness or unstable residency,
10 placement in foster care, hospitalization or placement in a correctional institution. The
11 manager shall:

12 A. Develop, implement and coordinate strategies to ensure that such children and their
13 families receive support, guidance and assistance in accessing and navigating
14 educational, child welfare, mental health and other services and programs through a
15 coordinated and seamless statewide support network; and

16 B. Achieve the purposes of paragraph A through the liaison network, which must
17 include a coordinated response team across all appropriate state agencies and local
18 liaisons in regional state offices, school administrative units, juvenile correctional
19 facilities, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, mental health crisis agencies and other
20 appropriate entities that provide services useful and relevant to achieving the purposes
21 of paragraph A.

22 The manager shall work with all appropriate state agencies in carrying out the
23 responsibilities of this subsection, including, but not limited to, the Department of Health
24 and Human Services, the Department of Corrections and the Children's Cabinet.

25 **3. Support.** The department shall ensure that the manager has the support and staffing
26 services necessary to achieve the purposes of this section and shall coordinate other
27 activities and programs of the department relevant to the work of the manager so as to
28 maximize the effectiveness of the manager in achieving the purposes of this section.

29 **SUMMARY**

30 This bill establishes the Keeping Maine Children Connected Program Manager within
31 the Department of Education to assist children in crisis or experiencing disruption by
32 developing, implementing and coordinating strategies to ensure such children and their
33 families receive support, guidance and assistance in accessing and navigating educational,
34 child welfare, mental health and other services and programs through a coordinated and
35 seamless statewide support network. The manager is directed to establish, train and
36 maintain a statewide network of persons able to achieve this purpose, including a
37 coordinated response team across all relevant state agencies and local liaisons in regional
38 state offices, school administrative units, juvenile correctional facilities, inpatient
39 psychiatric hospitals, mental health crisis agencies and other appropriate entities.

40 The department is directed to ensure that the manager has the necessary support and
41 staffing services and to coordinate any activities and programs of the department relevant

1 to the work of the manager so as to maximize the effectiveness of the manager in achieving
2 the purposes of this section.