



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1608

S.P. 640

In Senate, April 11, 2023

An Act to Address Teacher Shortages Through Financial Assistance and Career Advancement Opportunities

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator PIERCE of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth and
Senators: INGWERSEN of York, ROTUNDO of Androscoggin, TIPPING of Penobscot,
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, MURPHY of Scarborough,
WHITE of Waterville, ZAGER of Portland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §12504**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 303, §6, is further amended
3 to read:

4 **§12504. Allocation of funds**

5 The authority shall establish by rule the allocation of funds available under this chapter.

6 Loans in an amount to be determined annually by the authority based on available
7 funds, but in no event less than \$3,000 or more than \$8,000 per academic year for eligible
8 undergraduate students and no less than \$2,000 or more than \$8,000 per academic year for
9 eligible students pursuing postbaccalaureate certification, may be made. Selected full-time
10 undergraduate students may receive loans for a period not to exceed 8 semesters at the
11 institution they attend. Selected full-time and part-time students pursuing
12 postbaccalaureate certifications may receive loans for a period not to exceed 4 semesters
13 or the equivalent thereof at the institution they attend. An individual who has received an
14 Educators for Maine loan as an undergraduate may also receive a loan for students pursuing
15 postbaccalaureate certification. Loans are for one academic year and are renewable if the
16 recipient maintains a grade point average of at least 2.5 based on a 4.0 grade point system
17 or the equivalent and submits a complete renewal application by the deadline annually.

18 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §15689-A, sub-§29** is enacted to read:

19 **29. Teacher residency.** The commissioner may expend and disburse funds for the
20 hiring of education students who participate in a teacher residency program administered
21 by the University of Southern Maine that seeks to address teacher shortages in the State by
22 connecting postsecondary education students with teaching positions while the students
23 continue to take classes to fulfill the students' degree or certification requirements.

24 **Sec. 3. Maine Education Policy Research Institute to study career ladders**
25 **for educators.** The Maine Education Policy Research Institute shall study the
26 development of career ladders for educators. The study must include:

- 27 1. A review of career ladders for educators developed in other states, including
28 Maryland;
- 29 2. An analysis of the options for developing a teacher residency certificate and
30 advanced teacher certificates, such as distinguished teacher certificates and lead teacher
31 certificates;
- 32 3. Ways to diversify the educator workforce; and
- 33 4. Educator recruitment and retention best practices.

34 By December 6, 2023, the institute shall submit a report that includes its findings and
35 recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on
36 Education and Cultural Affairs. The committee may report out a bill related to the report
37 to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

38 **Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
39 allocations are made.

40 **EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**
41 **General Purpose Aid for Local Schools 0308**

1 Initiative: Provides ongoing funds to support the Maine Teacher Residency Program at the
2 University of Southern Maine.

3	GENERAL FUND	2023-24	2024-25
4	All Other	\$0	\$1,000,000
5			
6	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>

7 **SUMMARY**

8 This bill does the following.

9 1. It provides ongoing funds of \$1,000,000 beginning in fiscal year 2024-25 to the
10 Department of Education, General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program to support the
11 Maine Teacher Residency Program at the University of Southern Maine and authorizes the
12 Commissioner of Education to expend and disburse funds for that purpose.

13 2. It provides that the maximum loan per academic year under the Educators for Maine
14 Program is \$8,000 for undergraduate students and students pursuing postbaccalaureate
15 certification.

16 3. It requires the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to study the development
17 of career ladders for educators.