

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

H.P. 396 - L.D. 628

**An Act Regarding Eligibility to Apply for a Department of Education
Diploma**

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-A, as amended by PL 2023, c. 171, §1, is further amended to read:

1-A. Eligibility for students impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subsection 1, a student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student experienced a significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency ~~during the student's secondary school education history.~~

~~This subsection is repealed on September 1, 2026.~~

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-C is enacted to read:

1-C. Exception for disruption to student's education conditions. A student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is at least a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because of a disruption to the student's education during the student's secondary school education history. A disruption to the student's education may include, but is not limited to, conditions described in section 5161, subsection 2-A.

Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §5161, sub-§2-A, as amended by PL 2021, c. 445, §3, is further amended to read:

2-A. Education disruption. "Education disruption" means disruption of the educational program of an elementary or secondary school student as a result of:

A. Homelessness ~~or~~, foster care placement or another housing disruption;

B. ~~Absence for 10 or more consecutive school days due to placement in an interim program~~ more than 10% of the school days in a school year due to unforeseen circumstances, including, but not limited to, placement in an interim program, unplanned hospitalization or serious medical condition;

C. Enrollment in ~~3~~ 2 or more schools or educational programs ~~in a single school year~~
during the student's secondary school education; or

D. The student's being an immigrant student or a migrant student.

"Education disruption" does not include an absence for 10 or more consecutive school days as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence for a planned hospitalization or recovery or pursuant to a superintendent's determination developed in accordance with section 5205, subsection 2.