

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTEEN

—
S.P. 435 - L.D. 1230

An Act To Create a Digital Content Library for Education

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, there is not currently a digital content library for schools, colleges and universities to access digital educational content aligned to Maine's educational priorities, including assignments, learning resources and content;

Whereas, educational opportunities would be improved through easier access to digital content aligned with Maine's educational priorities;

Whereas, this legislation requires the establishment of an advisory group to design the digital content library and recommend to the Commissioner of Education an implementation plan and timeline in sufficient time for the commissioner to submit a report by January 15, 2016; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 805 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 805

DIGITAL CONTENT LIBRARY FOR EDUCATION

§19301. Digital content library

1. Digital content library established. The commissioner shall establish a digital content library to house a collection of high-quality digital educational content and learning resources aligned with the State's educational initiatives, delivered electronically

by school administrative units, private schools, public and private postsecondary institutions and nonprofit or for-profit content providers for sharing with other school administrative units, private schools, public and private postsecondary institutions and individuals.

2. Content. Content included in the digital content library established pursuant to subsection 1 must further the State's educational initiatives, including learning through technology, proficiency-based diploma standards, college and career readiness and student achievement in the system of standards and assessment established under chapter 222.

3. Administration. The commissioner shall establish administrative specifications for the digital content library established pursuant to subsection 1, including:

A. Specifications and criteria in at least the following areas regarding digital educational content and learning resources to be included in the digital content library:

- (1) Alignment with the system of learning results established under section 6209;
- (2) Development of greater student depth of knowledge or complex reasoning;
- (3) Integration of technology;
- (4) Relevance to community involvement and employment in the State;
- (5) Level of interest to students; and
- (6) Quality of instruction;

B. A method for involving educators, educational organizations and institutions, school administrative units, private schools, public and private postsecondary institutions and nonprofit or for-profit content providers to create content for possible inclusion in the digital content library;

C. A method for reviewing digital educational content and learning resources to determine whether digital educational content and learning resources should be included in the digital content library;

D. A method for curating digital educational content and learning resources included in the digital content library to provide for continuous review of currency and consistency with the specifications and criteria adopted under this section; and

E. Technical specifications in at least the following areas:

- (1) Cataloguing available content, with information regarding each item of digital educational content or learning resource that includes:
 - (a) Identification of appropriate grade level;
 - (b) Subject area;
 - (c) Brief descriptions, including descriptions of the type of digital educational content or learning resource;
 - (d) Links to the digital educational content or learning resource; and

- (e) Number of instructional hours required to complete the digital educational content or learning resource;
- (2) A rating and recommendation system for students and educators to provide feedback on digital educational content and learning resources included in the digital content library;
- (3) Tracking use of specific digital educational content or learning resources; and
- (4) Accessibility of the digital content library from any device with Internet connectivity.

4. Review. The commissioner may convene an advisory group consisting of, at a minimum, a representative from the department, a public school educator from the State and a representative from a statewide educational association or organization to review and suggest modifications and updates to the digital content library established pursuant to subsection 1. The commissioner shall review and may approve or modify the recommendations of the advisory group regarding the requirements set forth in this section.

5. Training. The commissioner may provide professional development and training on the use of the digital content library.

6. Power to contract. The commissioner may enter into a contract with an entity to implement any recommendations of the advisory group under subsection 4.

7. Report. The commissioner shall report annually by January 15th to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs regarding the digital content library established pursuant to subsection 1, and specifically the items in this section.

Sec. 2. Digital content library advisory group. The Commissioner of Education shall convene an advisory group to design the digital content library established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 805. The advisory group must include a representative from the Department of Education, a public school educator in the State and a representative from a statewide educational association or organization. The advisory group shall recommend to the commissioner methods for fulfilling the requirements of Title 20-A, section 19301. In addition, the advisory group shall:

1. Recommend a business model that allows for competitive exchange of digital educational content and learning resources that maintains low costs for schools and rewards authors when their digital educational content and learning resources are accessed through the digital content library; and
2. Establish an implementation plan and timeline for the digital content library.

The recommendations of the advisory group must be included, in written form, in the report by the commissioner to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs required by January 15, 2016 under Title 20-A, section 19301, subsection 7.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.