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Legislative Document

No. 1118

S.P. 390

In Senate, March 26, 2015

**Resolve, To Establish the Study Commission on the Social
Emotional Learning and Development of Maine's Young Children**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BREEN of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative MALABY of Hancock and
Senators: ALFOND of Cumberland, GRATWICK of Penobscot, HASKELL of Cumberland,
MILLETT of Cumberland, Representatives: GATTINE of Westbrook, HUBBELL of Bar
Harbor, PIERCE of Falmouth, SANBORN of Gorham.

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

3 **Whereas,** the Study Commission on the Social Emotional Learning and
4 Development of Maine's Young Children aims to promote the social development of
5 young children and reduce expulsions in early child care and education settings in the
6 State; and

7 **Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that
8 the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next
9 legislative session; and

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

14 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule
15 353, the Study Commission on the Social Emotional Learning and Development of
16 Maine's Young Children, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established;
17 and be it further

18 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of
19 17 members appointed as follows:

- 20 1. One member of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 21 2. One member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the
22 House of Representatives;
- 23 3. Thirteen members appointed by the Commissioner of Education as follows:
 - 24 A. One representative of the Department of Education, Child Development Services
25 System;
 - 26 B. One representative of the Department of Education, Office of Special Services;
 - 27 C. One elementary school principal;
 - 28 D. One representative of an organization promoting child welfare;
 - 29 E. One representative of an organization promoting children's mental health;
 - 30 F. One representative of an organization promoting early childhood advocacy;
 - 31 G. One person with experience in the early and periodic screening, diagnostic and
32 treatment benefit under Medicaid;
 - 33 H. One pediatrician representing the Maine chapter of the American Academy of
34 Pediatrics;
 - 35 I. One representative of the child care industry; and

- 1 J. Four members of the Maine Children's Growth Council; and
- 2 4. Two members appointed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Service as
- 3 follows:
- 4 A. One representative of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of
- 5 Child and Family Services, Child Care Services; and
- 6 B. One representative of the Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start
- 7 and Early Head Start; and be it further

8 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the

9 House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission; and be it further

10 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all

11 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this

12 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative

13 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointments of all members,

14 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more

15 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been

16 made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority

17 for the commission to meet and conduct its business; and be it further

18 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

19 1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of the policies, rules, funding and services for

20 early child care and education programs that promote young children's social emotional

21 learning and development and that address children's behavioral needs and make

22 recommendations based on the inventory. The inventory and recommendations must

23 address assets and gaps relating to availability, funding and delivery of services that

24 support the healthy social emotional learning and development of young children across

25 the State;

26 2. Examine the State's current capacity to provide education, training and

27 professional development to early childhood program staff and educators to strengthen

28 skills in promoting young children's social emotional learning and development and

29 effectively addressing children's behavioral needs;

30 3. Gather existing data relating to the expulsion, suspension and exclusionary

31 discipline practices with regard to young children up to 8 years of age and teachers'

32 reporting requirements for professional development and classroom supports in

33 addressing children's behavioral needs; and

34 4. Make recommendations regarding:

35 A. Appropriate and necessary training for early childhood educators and support

36 staff to support and teach young children the skills the children need for healthy

37 social emotional learning and development;

38 B. Staff competencies and evidence-based intervention techniques and approaches

39 that prevent expulsion, suspension and other exclusionary discipline practices,

1 including standards for effective early childhood mental health consultation and
2 positive behavior intervention and support strategies;

3 C. Changes in the preparation of early childhood educators that facilitate an
4 understanding of how to teach children social emotional skills and the management
5 of behaviors;

6 D. Methods and guidelines for the ongoing collection of data to monitor the
7 expulsion, suspension and exclusionary discipline practices with regard to young
8 children;

9 E. Model policies relating to the social emotional learning and development of
10 children that include practices that are developmentally appropriate, contain
11 nondiscriminatory discipline procedures and guidelines and promote an integrated
12 classroom. The recommendations must include a plan to appropriately transition
13 children in early child care settings to preschool and kindergarten and support
14 working parents and may include a pilot program;

15 F. Changes to law and policies that will support a continuum of integrated social
16 emotional learning and development opportunities for young children based on the
17 inventory of resources and capacity of early childhood programs under subsection 1;

18 G. How early childhood programs and public schools can collaborate and ensure that
19 a system is developed that efficiently utilizes limited resources and provides
20 continuity of care for young children moving between programs and schools; and

21 H. Parent education that promotes young children's social emotional growth and
22 effective responses to behavioral challenges; and be it further

23 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Department of Education shall
24 provide necessary staffing services to the commission; and be it further

25 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 2, 2015, the commission
26 shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested
27 legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. The Joint
28 Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may report out legislation based
29 upon the report to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

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

32 **SUMMARY**

33 This resolve creates the Study Commission on the Social Emotional Learning and
34 Development of Maine's Young Children to promote the social emotional learning and
35 development of young children and reduce expulsions in early child care and education
36 settings in the State by making an inventory of policies, rules, funding and services
37 regarding early child care and education in the State and making recommendations,
38 including suggested legislation, to strengthen the support for young children's social
39 emotional learning and development and to address young children's behavioral needs.