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Legislative Document

No. 1441

S.P. 543

In Senate, June 2, 2015

An Act To Establish the Public Higher Education Systems Coordinating Committee

Reported by Senator LANGLEY of Hancock for the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Order 2015, S.P. 185.

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

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

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §9**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. DDDDD, §1, is
3 repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4 **§9. Public Higher Education Systems Coordinating Committee**

5 **1. Committee established.** The Public Higher Education Systems Coordinating
6 Committee, referred to in this section as "the committee," is established to promote
7 efficiency, cooperative effort and strategic planning between the University of Maine
8 System and the Maine Community College System, referred to in this section as "the
9 systems."

10 **2. Membership.** The committee consists of the Chancellor of the University of
11 Maine System, the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, the
12 President of the Maine Community College System and the Chair of the Board of
13 Trustees of the Maine Community College System. The members of the committee may
14 appoint designees to a subcommittee.

15 **3. Duties.** The committee shall seek to achieve greater collaboration and
16 cooperation between the systems in order to address issues including, but not limited to,
17 the following:

18 A. Improving college affordability;

19 B. Minimizing or eliminating barriers to student transfer between the systems;

20 C. Reducing unnecessary duplication of programs between the systems;

21 D. Identifying opportunities for sharing best practices and individual efficiencies,
22 building cross-system economies of scale and sharing of resources;

23 E. Recommending changes to state laws that would improve the systems' efficiency
24 or effectiveness;

25 F. In consultation with the President of the Maine Maritime Academy and the Chair
26 of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy, investigating and pursuing
27 opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing with the Maine Maritime
28 Academy. The committee shall notify the President of the Maine Maritime Academy
29 of committee meetings and agenda items; and

30 G. In consultation with the commissioner and the chair of the state board,
31 investigating and pursuing opportunities to improve college preparation, transition
32 and completion for Maine's secondary students, including supporting early college
33 opportunities and improving credit transfer between secondary and postsecondary
34 school systems.

35 **4. Meetings.** The committee shall meet at least twice each year and the committee
36 members' designees may meet more frequently. The chancellor shall convene the first
37 meeting of the committee by October 15, 2015. The committee shall establish a meeting
38 schedule, and the initial work must include an accounting of the members' prior and
39 current efforts to promote efficiency, cooperative effort and strategic planning between

1 the systems. The committee shall elect a chair from among its members to serve for a
2 term to be determined by the committee.

3 **5. Reporting.** The committee shall report succinctly on its deliberations and any
4 recommendations to the Governor and the joint standing committee of the Legislature
5 having jurisdiction over education matters by February 15th each year.

6 SUMMARY

7 This bill is reported out pursuant to joint order by the Joint Standing Committee on
8 Education and Cultural Affairs.

9 The bill replaces the Education Coordinating Committee with the Public Higher
10 Education Systems Coordinating Committee to:

11 1. Promote efficiency, cooperative effort and strategic planning between the
12 governance structures of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community
13 College System and address issues including, but not limited to, improving college
14 affordability, promoting student transfer between the systems, reducing the duplication of
15 programs, identifying opportunities for building cross-system economies of scale and
16 sharing of resources and recommending statutory changes to improve the efficiency or
17 effectiveness of the public institutions of higher education;

18 2. Investigate and pursue opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing with
19 the Maine Maritime Academy; and

20 3. With the Commissioner of Education and the Chair of the State Board of
21 Education, investigate and pursue opportunities to improve college preparation, transition
22 and completion for Maine's secondary students.

23 The first meeting of the committee must be convened by October 15, 2015 and the
24 committee is directed to meet at least twice each year.

25 The committee is required to submit a report on its deliberations, including any
26 recommendations, to the Governor and the joint standing committee of the Legislature
27 having jurisdiction over education matters by February 15th each year.