

CCECAC letter re LD2064

February 5, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Chair
Representative Murphy, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 2064, An Act to Expand Access to Early Childhood Nutrition by Establishing a Grant Program for Public Preschools

On behalf of the Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council (CCECAC) we are pleased to write today to express our support of LD 2064, An Act to Expand Access to Early Childhood Nutrition by Establishing a Grant Program for Public Preschool.

The CCECAC is a legislatively-established Council that focuses on the implementation of early childhood policy and programming and serves as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. The Council advises the Children's Cabinet and policymakers on a range of issues related to early childhood and works to ensure statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services in the State, including child care, Head Start, IDEA preschool and infants and families' programs, and pre-kindergarten programs and services. Its [members](#) include legislators, parents, child care providers, philanthropy, business and organizations that advance the well-being of children.

Members of the Council have long been concerned about the inequities posed by the current system for meals in public pre-k partnerships located in off-site locations. In Maine right now, the children, who participate in a public pre-K program housed within a public elementary school, are able to access free food through the state's school meals program. For those children who are enrolled in a public pre-K partnership located at an off-site location such as a child care or Head Start Program, however, free school meals are not available. For children enrolled in a public pre-K partnership at an off-site location, such as a child care or Head Start program, free school meals are not eligible for reimbursement through the National School Lunch Program. In some cases, these meals are funded by the School Administrative Unit when local funding is made available. In a handful of cases, child care centers pick up the meal costs for children that are not eligible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

It is important to the CCECAC that all Maine children – wherever they live, and wherever they are receiving their public education – are able to access good, nutritious food to support their growth, learning and ability to thrive. In addition, the Council supports the establishment of public pre-K partnerships between schools and child care programs. A number of the participants in our monthly meetings represent child care programs who are involved in successful partnerships with schools and are providing quality pre-k education and programming to 4 year olds. The current policy hinders the ability of child care programs to partner with schools.

We do want to point out to the Committees, however, that while the CCECAC is currently written into the draft statutory language as the administrator of the program, it is not positioned to do so. As an advisory council, we have neither the capacity nor the authority to engage in such work and to take on such responsibilities. To be clear, we are very strongly in support of the proposed new grant program - we are just not the entity to manage it.

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We would, of course, look forward to providing input as the program envisioned under the legislation is further developed. As the Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council, we believe the experiences and insights of the members of this group could be invaluable to helping to create a program that will meet the needs of students, families and providers.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Colleen J. Quint, Chair

On behalf of the members of the Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council