



Regional School Unit 63
Office of Special Services
Clifton, Eddington, and Holden

RSU 63 is a community of learners dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging academic environment. Our students are respectful citizens and responsible stewards of our world. They are well prepared for high school with skills and a work ethic that enables them to succeed.

March 3, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Krista Vining-Means and I am the Special Education Director for RSU63. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 2175: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115: The Credentialing of Education Personnel, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education, State Board of Education of which I submit testimony in strong support of.

Specific to the credentialing of individuals providing special education services:

282: Teacher of Children with Disabilities

This expansion strengthens Maine's commitment to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and aligns with the implementation of LD 345: An Act to Transition the Responsibility for Child Find Activities and for Ensuring a Free, Appropriate Public Education for Eligible Children from the Child Development Services (CDS) System to School Administrative Units.

Over the past several years, Maine has not met its federal and state obligation to serve children with disabilities, aged 3 -5, through the CDS System resulting in several citations from the U.S. Department of Education and most importantly, children not receiving the special education services they are entitled to. Without this expansion, Maine children with disabilities under Part B, Section 619 risk not receiving mandated special education services—despite the presence of qualified special education teachers ready to provide these essential supports.

This revision appropriately recognizes that:

- School districts are now, or will be by July 1, 2028, directly responsible for ensuring FAPE for preschool-aged children with disabilities.
- Special education teachers must be credentialed to serve this age span.
- Early specialized instruction and intervention delivered through individualized education programs (IEPs) in early childhood settings promote foundational skill development and help prevent widening achievement gaps in later grades.
- Individuals holding a current, valid 282 may wish to recertify within the spans (Birth-5, K-8, or 7-12); the revision does not preclude individuals from recertifying under their current endorsement
- Small and rural schools in Maine often experience significant financial and staffing hardship. Even when overall K–12 or PK–12 special education child counts are low, districts may be required to hire more than one special education teacher solely due to age or grade span limitations within certification rule; oftentimes resulting long-term substitutes, unmet need, or other challenges. Expanding the 282 endorsement provides necessary flexibility, allowing a qualified teacher to serve a broader age range and reducing duplicative staffing burdens while still meeting compliance requirements.

Renewal Option

Additionally, I provide strong support for the renewal option allowing current 282 certificate holders to renew under the revised age/grade span should they elect to.

I would like to thank the Maine State Board of Education for their thoughtful work and dedication in updating Chapter 115 and urge the Committee to vote to “ought to pass” on this piece of legislation.

Krista Vining-Means, Special Education Director RSU63