

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Michael Perry, Acting Director of Higher Education and Educator Support Services

In Support of: L.D. 1217

Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program for Alternative Teacher Certification

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Senator Rotundo

Date: April 13, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Michael Perry, and I am here today representing the Department speaking in support of L.D. 1217, Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program for Alternative Teacher Certification, which would create an opportunity to develop a set of certification pilot programs for teachers and education technicians.

The Maine Department of Education is committed to developing alternative pathways for our aspiring educators. LD 1217 allows us to explore possibilities for honoring life and career experience when considering the qualifications of educators. This will help us to expand and grow an education workforce that is inclusive and better reflects the makeup of our State and local communities.

The Department of Education believes in a whole student approach to education that develops and prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow by addressing their comprehensive needs through a shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities. One of the tenets of Maine's Whole Student Approach is supporting the educator workforce.

For these reasons, the Department of Education is in support of L.D. 1217. I am happy to answer any questions, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.

Original language

That the Department of Education shall create a pilot program to provide alternative teacher certification that targets demographic groups that are underrepresented in the education workforce or who hold unique expertise and experience. The pilot program must allow potential educators to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and skills that are defined within nationally recognized standards for beginning educators. The program must allow an individual who receives an alternative teacher certification to renew that certification for a reasonable amount of time until the individual can achieve traditional certification. The department shall submit a report with findings and recommendations concerning the program to the Legislature no later than December 6, 2023.

LD 1217 Resolve Amendment

That the Maine Department of Education may pilot the issuance of alternative teacher and educational technician certificates which target demographic groups that are underrepresented in the education workforce or who hold unique expertise and experience.

The pilot programs must allow potential educators to provide evidence of the knowledge and skills that are defined within nationally recognized, competency-based standards for beginning educators in order to become certified.

The programs must enable an individual who receives an alternative teacher or educational technician certification to renew that certification for a reasonable amount of time until the individual can achieve professional certification as prescribed in State Board of Education Rule Chapter 115. This timeline may be based on individual applicant circumstances and is not to exceed ten years.

The Department shall submit a report with findings and recommendations concerning the pilots to the Legislature no later than December 6, 2023.