

State of Maine
Department of Education

Testimony of Jennifer Belanger, Legislative Research and Communications Specialist, Maine Department of Education

In Support of: L.D. 2020

An Act to Update Department of Education Reporting Requirements

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Murphy

Date: January 20, 2026

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

My name is Jennifer Belanger, and I am here today representing the Department speaking in support of L.D. 2020, An Act to Update Department of Education Reporting Requirements. Since 2023, I've worked on the Legislative Team at the Maine Department of Education (DOE), and a central part of my role outside of the Legislative Session is coordinating work groups and reports for the Maine DOE.

The key purpose of this legislation is to better align the information needed by legislators with the availability of data. Further, this bill also operationalizes key recommendations provided to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee in previous iterations of these Annual Reports.

In Section 1, we are seeking to enact the recommendation provided in previous Annual Concussion Reports regarding the frequency of reporting. The rationale for this recommendation is that changes in national data shows that the incidence of concussion is somewhat stable as stated in our 2023 report, and the International Conference on Concussion in Sports, who leads best practices, only convenes every few years (Patricios, Schneider, Dvorak, et al. 2023). This recommendation is supported by the Concussion Work Group.

In Section 2, we are seeking a small change to the Annual Truancy Report, to push back its due date from January 15 to March 1 of each year. This is due to the availability of data in which we rely on to draft the report. That data is not ready for analysis until January. We are not seeking any substantive changes to the Annual Truancy Report.

Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 regard annual reporting on Child Development Services (CDS) and the transition of free, appropriate public education (FAPE) from CDS to school administrative units (SAUs) for 3- and 4-year-olds with a disability. In our 2025 CDS to SAU Transition Report, we recommended this change to the Committee. At the core is the Annual CDS Report, as outlined in §7209, subsection 4, paragraph E. The items we are proposing to report on in future iterations of the two reports are substantive, comprehensive, and are in alignment with data

and information that we possess. The goal is to provide a more effective snapshot of the work done by CDS and the students it serves.

In Section 7, we are seeking a similar change to the Annual Summer Programs Report as with the Annual Truancy Report in Section 2, asking to push back the deadline from November 15 to March 1, due to data availability.

Section 8 is seeking a small substantive change to the Annual Postsecondary Retention and Graduation Rate Report. While comparative data is certainly useful, there is not a straightforward method to compare “peer institutions.” In previous reports, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (CCHE) system has been used to identify comparisons for Maine-based institutions. Unfortunately, due to the specificity of certain fields, peer institutions cannot always be determined by using the CCHE datasets to find exact matches, leading to subjective choices. This dataset is updated every three years, while actual institution characteristics and offerings change more frequently. This has been a significant limitation to this report in past years.

Sections 9 and 10 propose broadening the Annual Educator Preparation Program Report – changing its title to “Educator Workforce Preparation Data” Report and aligning the reported data to better align with the realities of educator certification in Maine. The Educator Preparation Program Report currently only captures a small portion of the teacher workforce. By broadening this report, the Legislature will have a more accurate picture of the educator workforce landscape in Maine.

The Department of Education is in support of L.D. 2020, An Act to Update Department of Education Reporting Requirements. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.

Change Dates Due to Data Availability

Bill Section	Report Title	Statutory Due Date	Availability of Data	Proposed Due Date
Section 2	Annual Truancy Report	January 15	Mid-January	March 1
Section 7	Annual Summer Programming Report	November 15	Mid-December	March 1

Change Frequency to Align with National Practices

Bill Section	Report Title	Rationale	Recommended to ECA
Section 1	Annual Concussion Report	Aligns with frequency of International Conference on Concussion in Sports. Aligns with frequency of national reporting and guidance updates. Trends have stabilized.	2024 2025

Change Reporting Items to Better Align with Data Sources and Information

Bill Section	Report Title	Change	Rationale	Recommended to ECA
Section 5	CDS Annual Report	Eliminate §7209, sub-§5, paragraph E; Replace with Section 5	Streamlines federal and state reporting requirements. Provides relevant fiscal, programmatic, and operational information about CDS.	2025 CDS to SAU Transition Report
Section 6	CDS to SAU Transition Report	Remove reference to §7209, sub-§5, paragraph E; Replace with Section 6	Many aspects of §7209, sub-§5, paragraph E are only relevant to CDS, not SAUs. Provides relevant, targeted, information about the transition.	2025 CDS to SAU Transition Report
Section 8	Annual Postsecondary Retention and Graduation Report	Remove requirement for peer institutions.	Comparisons are subject to change year to year as program offerings change, while the	2025 ("Limitations" section)

			<p>database used is only updated every 3 years. Comparisons are subjective, cumbersome to determine, prone to human error.</p> <p>Year-over-year data regarding Maine institutions provide more consistent and measurable data regarding progress.</p>	
Sections 9-10	Annual Educator Preparation Programs Report	Broaden scope of report to discuss all types of certification	<p>Pre-service educators who come through Educator Preparation Programs are now a minority of certification-seekers.</p> <p>Broadening this report will provide Legislators with the fuller picture of the education workforce.</p>	2025