

State of Maine
Department of Education

Testimony of Laura Cyr, Ph.D., Federal and State Legislative Specialist, Maine Department of Education

In Support of: L.D. 2099

An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Sargent

Date: January 28, 2026

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

My name is Dr. Laura Cyr, and I am here today representing the Maine Department of Education (DOE) speaking in support of L.D. 2099, An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses. This bill proposes several updates that would clarify some of the parameters of the Aspirations Program. The Maine DOE has worked extensively with the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to develop a set of criteria that are not only acceptable to the institutions but are better suited to serve more of our Maine high school students.

For example, the first change sought clarifies that the academic year is inclusive of the summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order, for scheduling course enrollment purposes. Other minor changes include simplified course enrollment approval and student eligibility language. This includes a language change we propose after continued work with the University of Maine System and Maine Community College System to respect their institutional determinations on student eligibility.

An additional change offered in this bill is the requirement for high schools to record Aspirations-funded coursework on student transcripts. This is not intended to require schools to accept coursework to meet diploma requirements. The intent is to provide documentation to allow students to easily request secondary transcripts for potential future postsecondary enrollment opportunities. With thirteen campuses participating in the program, it is possible a student may not recall which course they took from which institution. The intent of this change is to streamline the process for students and families.

Over the past three decades, the Aspirations Program has become increasingly popular for students. The statutory changes seek a lifetime credit cap of 18 credits with an allowance of six additional credits for students within designated career and technical education (CTE) programs of study. This will provide students with the opportunity for meaningful progress toward a

postsecondary certificate or degree program. These limits do not prevent a student from enrolling in additional coursework but limit their use of Aspirations funded credits. In fact, we anticipate that the lifetime cap will extend these same opportunities to more students.

A credit cap, coupled with a focus on supporting students' intentional selection of coursework is consistent with the shared philosophy, "credits with a purpose," where students select coursework that is consistent with their post high school plans.

The Maine Department of Education is in support of L.D. 2099 An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.