



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

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GOVERNOR

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COMMISSIONER

February 17, 2021

Senator Matthea Daughtry, Co-chair
Representative Michael Brennan, Co-chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Dear Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Committee,

The purpose of LD 127, Resolve, To Establish a Pilot Program To Provide Grants for Professional Development in Computer Science Instruction (EMERGENCY) in order to support the growth of computer science educators as well as increase the access to computer science for traditionally underrepresented students.

The Department has been supporting and enhancing the development of computer science education in Maine through the creation and implementation of the computer science education state plan, collaboration with educators, educational leaders, partner organizations and stakeholders, as well as deliberate and actionable research that directly informs this important work.

In collaboration with other Computer Science leaders, the Department facilitated Maine's participation in the Expanding Computer Science Education Pathways (ECEP) data project in 2020 to examine Computer Science education in Maine and to identify courses that teach Computer Science skills. This work helped to inform an initial map of current computer science education programs. To build upon the results of the ECEP study, the Department is preparing a landscape study in 2021 to identify target areas of support and to create a more robust picture of Computer Science education in Maine. The results of this study will bring light to areas of computer science education that are underrepresented in traditional data research and allow us to focus our efforts in those identified areas.

In 2019, the Department convened a group of 30 computer science educators to create the state [computer science education plan](#). This plan outlines seven targeted recommendations for computer science education development and support throughout the state. Each recommendation includes actions that the Department is working to implement with computer science educators throughout the state. The goals of the plan are to enhance existing computer science education, increase equitable and inclusive opportunities for students, and raise awareness of the importance of computer science education in communities and throughout the state.

One of the components of the state computer science education plan's second recommendation is to "establish a grant program that provides funds/materials to get high need schools to the minimum required to offer computer science." LD 127's pilot grant program aligns with this

recommendation and would provide critical professional learning to enable LEAs to train interested educators to become computer science teachers and move closer to our goal of every student in Maine having access to computer science educational programming.

The Department looks forward to continued conversations around LD 127 and will be happy to answer any questions during the work session.

Sincerely,



Beth Lambert
Director of Innovative Teaching & Learning



Emma-Marie Banks
Computer Science Specialist