



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 278, An Act to Establish a Process for the Consideration and Implementation of Changes to Mandated Instruction or Training for Students is to establish a process to review and evaluate curricular proposals and report the findings of the review to the joint standing committee of the Legislature that considers preK-12 school curricular proposals. The bill establishes a review committee composed of practicing teachers, school administrators, and content area experts. The review committee will determine whether the curricular content or training for students in any legislative proposal is already addressed in the System of Learning Results, and if not, evaluate the proposal regarding the availability of resources, staff expertise, numbers of courses already required, and the availability of hours of instruction. LD 278 also allows for the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs to hold a work session and vote on the proposed legislation.

This bill provides an opportunity for educators and curriculum leaders to be involved in reviewing curricular or training proposals and mandates. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs will receive the insights of Maine educators who have expertise in the curricular or training proposals being considered by the Legislature.

It is the responsibility of the Maine Department of Education and the Maine State Legislature to provide state level learning standards. The System of Learning Results is a set of standards, or endpoints, for students. These standards ensure that learning expectations are consistent for all students, regardless of geography. It is the local school boards' responsibility, with the education professionals in their local school districts, to determine the curriculum they will use to ensure their students meet the state level learning standards. Curriculum is the day-to-day set of lessons educators develop within the framework of a school's curriculum to guide students to meet the standards articulated in the System of Learning Results. The Department continues to support the System of Learning Results with its standards, and further continues to support the authority of local school districts to establish curriculum locally.

Starting in 2017, the Department has used a [thirteen-step process](#) to ensure that the standards for each content area are reviewed and revised, as needed, on an established timeline and through a consistent process. Since 2017, each of the eight content areas has either completed or is currently undergoing a revision following these thirteen steps. The revision schedule is designed so that each content area is reviewed every five years to help ensure that they continue to be consistent with best practices and new or amended statute.

While the Department facilitates the revision process of the standards along with developing supporting resources and providing professional development related to the standards, all curricular implementation decisions are made at the local level by each SAU. This responsibility for curriculum is part of Maine's long, proud tradition of local control. Therefore, the Department does not have a process for reviewing, approving, or tracking curriculum that is being developed and used because that is a local responsibility.

The Department looks forward to continued conversations around LD 278 and will be happy to answer any questions during the work session.

Sincerely,



Beth Lambert
Director of Innovative Teaching & Learning



Joe Schmidt
Acting Coordinator of Secondary Education
Social Studies Specialist