

State of Maine  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Wilson G. Hess, Chairman of the State Board of Education

In Support of: L.D. 680

“Resolve, Establishing a Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System To Support Workforce Development”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Senator Daughtry

Date: March 16, 2021

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

My name is Wilson Hess, I am the Chair of the State Board of Education and I am here today on behalf of the State Board to speak in support of L.D. 680 “Resolve, Establishing a Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System To Support Workforce Development”

The State Board of Education believes that Maine students should be afforded robust, high quality, and comprehensive educational offerings that lead to careers which may be enhanced by, but do not require, traditional 2 or 4-year advanced degree programs. In high school programs, college readiness receives a lot of attention; career-centered pathways deserve the same.

Under MRSA Title 20-A the State Board of Education has responsibilities to develop and adopt a plan for the establishment of career and technical education centers and regions and act upon applications to alter the delivery of career and technical education within career and technical education regions and center areas. The Board’s Strategic Plan sets goals to strengthen and enhance the delivery of Career and Technical Education programs in the State of Maine. The plan’s strategic priorities include: directing a greater portion of CTE funds towards instruction & instructionally related services, doubling enrollment in CTE programs, introducing CTE instruction into Maine’s middle schools, and better aligning secondary and post-secondary CTE offerings and programs statewide.

Further MRSA Title 20-A identifies the State Board as the designated state agency authorized to administer federal funds, developing a state plan, approving the State's application for career and technical education funds, and disbursing federal money as authorized and required by applicable federal law for the benefit of career and technical education programs in the State.

In this capacity in compliance with the newly re-authorized federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (a.k.a. Perkins V), the State Board developed a State Five Year Plan in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V. Developed in consultation with core stakeholders from around the state and in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V Maine's State Plan was one of the first to receive approval by USDOE in May 2020. The core stakeholder group included representatives from the Maine State Board of Education, middle school education, secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education, charter schools, guidance, business and industry, Maine Department of Labor, labor associations, and members of the public. Maine is using the Perkins V State Plan process to set the roadmap for the future of CTE in Maine. It is important to note for LD 680, that throughout these stakeholder conversations, there was universal agreement that Maine should look to extend the work of the Perkins V State Plan to develop an even more comprehensive CTE vision that includes collaboration between education and workforce.

In summary, we believe that the intent of LD 680 is consistent with a major aspiration of the State Board's strategic plan and the its Perkins V plan: to work with MDOE and other stakeholders to develop further policy and legislative recommendations to enhance CTE program delivery in Maine, with the objective of submitting policy recommendations to the MDOE and Maine Legislature for consideration in the 2022 legislative session.

The State Board of Education endorses LD 680 "Resolve, Establishing a Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System To Support Workforce Development" and recommends an ought to pass motion.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I will be happy to respond to any questions.