

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Beth Lambert, Director of Innovative Teaching and Learning

In Support of: L.D. 1932

Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education (EMERGENCY)

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Brennan

Date: February 8, 2022

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

My name is Beth Lambert, and I am here today representing the Department speaking in support of L.D. 1932: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education (EMERGENCY).

Title 20-A, M.R.S., §6209 gives the Department the authority to establish and implement a comprehensive, statewide System of Learning Results. These standards serve as guideposts that define what knowledge and skills students must achieve to be prepared for school, work and life after high school graduation. Standards set clear and measurable goals. A common misunderstanding surrounding standards is the perception that standards serve as the curriculum or course of study in a particular subject. Rather, standards inform educators about what the outcomes of a course of study should be. Section 6209, subsection 4, requires the Department to conduct a review of the standards on a five-year cycle to ensure that these outcomes remain relevant and based on best practice. L.D. 1932 is the third wave of reviews in the five-year cycle and proposes revisions to the health and physical education, visual and performing arts, and world language standards.

The Maine Learning Results were last reviewed in their entirety in 2007. In preparation for that revision, the Department re-designed the format of the Maine Learning Results to create consistency across all content areas and create a common format unique to Maine. This common format is designed to make it easier for educators to interpret standards as they shift from one content area to another. This new structure divides each content area's standards into three stages of development: childhood, pre-adolescence, and adolescence, and further identifies associated grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Standardized language has been used to ensure consistency across content areas. These descriptors and their corresponding definitions are:

Strand: A body of knowledge in a content area identified by a simple title.

Standard: Enduring understandings and skills that students can apply and transfer to contexts that are new to the student.

Performance Expectation: Building blocks to the standard and measurable articulations of what the student understands and can do.

The standards revision process for health and physical education, visual and performing arts, and world language, that began in the fall 2019, is a thorough process with multiple opportunities for stakeholder voice. The process started with a public comment period on the existing standards. These comments informed the work of the steering committee, made up of administrators, higher education faculty, and leaders in their fields from regions across the state, who collaborated to determine the elements and standards to be revised. Writing teams, comprised of retired and practicing Maine educators, used the steering committee's determinations to inform their work in drafting the revised standards. All educators in the fields of health and physical education, visual and performing arts, and world language were invited to participate on the writing teams and every educator who expressed an interest in participating - 70, in total - were included in the work. Once the writing team completed the draft, the revised standards were, once again, opened for public comment. The Department has attached the 13-step process to this testimony.

The proposed **health and physical education** standards have been revised to identify health education as a strand and physical education as a strand to better delineate the unique standards and performance expectations in each. For the health education strand, the proposed draft is closely aligned to the National Health Education Standards and includes minor adjustments to wording for clarification and combining or eliminating of some language to be more clear, concise, and appropriate (for the age level or age span). In addition, content topics and examples were removed from the performance expectations because the committee felt they were limiting the content by implying those were the only topics to be addressed. In the physical education strand, several standards were renamed and/or restructured and the performance expectations reworded to better meet the needs of Maine educators.

The proposed **visual and performing arts** standards have been adapted from the National Core Arts Standards while still including those items that Maine arts educators felt are specific to their work with Maine students. The first of two significant changes to the document is the addition media arts standards. Media arts is a rapidly developing field of the creative economy that includes audio, video, digital design, and mixed media creations. The second change is the realignment of strands that separate each arts discipline into its own collection of unique standards and performance expectations. Previously, three of the five arts standards were universal across all arts disciplines, but in the revised standards, they are individualized for each discipline. Although some disciplines share the same standards, their performance expectations are unique.

The proposed **world languages** standards are in alignment to national standards ([ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#)), which were published in 2012, and are designed to reflect best practices in world language instruction. Whereas the current standards include four

strands, in the proposed draft, they have been reorganized into five strands: communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. These strands are consistent with the five goal areas represented in the national standards. To make this shift, concepts included in the four original strands were retained but categorized differently in order to align with the five goal areas. For example, *language comparisons* appears in the communication strand in the current standards, while in the proposed draft it appears in the comparisons strand.

Another substantial shift is the inclusion of proficiency levels in addition to grade spans. The current standards represent a full pre-K to Grade 12 progression of language learning. The proposed draft also offers this full progression, while at the same time providing multiple entry points by directing educators to begin at the current level of proficiency of their students. For example, if an SAU's world language program begins in kindergarten, the educator will start by addressing the kindergarten/novice low performance expectations. If the program begins in 7th grade, the educator will start with the performance expectations in the same kindergarten/novice low level, in order to appropriately target instruction to students' current proficiency level.

Finally, a third shift is within the performance expectations themselves. In the current standards, performance expectations direct educators to focus on specific topics and skills within the standard. However, the proposed draft mirrors the national standards in its intention to provide general, universally applicable performance expectations that can be tailored to all languages, whether modern, classical, or signed. Supplemental resources will provide greater guidance on how to tailor them to specific languages, particularly classical and signed languages, which differ from modern languages in terms of uses, communities of speakers/users, and cultures. It is also important to note that the [NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements](#), which include general communication and intercultural communication, provided the basis for the performance expectations in the proposed standards. The performance expectations in the communication strand are based on the can-do statements for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. For the four remaining strands, performance expectations were established based primarily on the intercultural communication can-co statements.

L.D. 1932 is the result of a thorough process that began in the fall 2019 with multiple opportunities for stakeholder voice, and is the result of expertise from Department staff, representatives from higher education, district and building administration, as well as dozens of Maine educators. The Department believes deeply in the professional judgement and experience of Maine's educators, and we urge you to support their voices going forward in the development of standards for the State of Maine.

For these reasons, the Maine Department of Education supports L.D. 1932: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education (EMERGENCY), that was developed by teachers in schools and districts you represent. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.