



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
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JANET T. MILLS  
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COMMISSIONER

April 11, 2023

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

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

LD 1389, An Act to Establish a Mobile Learning Lab, requires the Department of Education to establish a mobile learning lab for hands-on STEM learning opportunities for students across the State, and provides \$400K in ongoing General Funds for 2023-24, 2024-25.

This bill allows the Maine Department of Education to enter into a public-private partnership to create a mobile learning lab that will provide opportunities for hands-on learning for students in all areas of the State. The bill further provides for contracted of services to support a mobile learning lab. The Department of Education (DOE) must abide by the rules and regulations of the Division of Procurement Services which provides procurement and related services for all State agencies. The Division ensures that all purchases are made in an atmosphere of open competition. Potential purchases include commodities, goods, and contracts. Any equipment, vehicle, or contract needed to satisfy this bill would be processed through Procurement.

Currently, the DOE supports hands-on STEAM learning through our summer professional development. During the summer months, as part of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI), educators come together to participate in professional development that guides them through the process of developing STEAM classroom environments that use teamwork, technology design, prototyping and production. Each participant receives a STEAM cart worth over \$1,000 to bring back and use at their schools. Teachers leave the program with everything from power tools, 3D printers, robotics, and virtual workspaces. In addition to getting the STEAM carts, educators also design units and lessons that engage in STEAM powered learning. And finally, during the school year, educators who participate in the summer learning host full STEAM days at their schools during the school year. MLTI's student leadership ambassadors of Maine lead these full day workshops where, throughout the day, students participate in STEAM activities on topics such as 3D design, coding, virtual reality (VR) and graphic design.

The Department has one suggestion relating to current DOE operational structure. As written, LD 1389 indicate the Mobile Learning Lab funding would be directed toward the Learning

Systems Team. The Department has updated our team structure and directing the funding to the Innovative Teaching and Learning Team, which specializes in areas such as technology and learning policy questions, MLTI Program, learning through technology, ConnectKidsNow!, MOOSE, computer science, interdisciplinary learning, and rural school access equity would be more appropriate.

The Department will be available to provide additional information on LD 1389 and respond to any questions during the upcoming work session.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

*Beth Lambert*

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Beth Lambert

Director of Innovative Teaching and Learning

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