

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



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March 30, 2023

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Chair
Representative Michael Brennan, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

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

This letter is to provide information regarding LD 948, *An Act to Create a Liaison Position Between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services on Early Childhood Education Matters*. This bill would create a position of early childhood education specialist within the Department of Education to act as a liaison between DOE and DHHS for children from birth to grade five.

DHHS and DOE do not have any current concerns regarding the ability of the two Departments to effectively collaborate on matters pertaining to early care and education. The two Departments regularly work cooperatively, for example on the federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG). This work included a needs assessment and grant applications, as well as planned future work now that Maine has been awarded the \$24 million grant.

The Children's Cabinet also plays a key role in assisting DOE and DHHS, as well as other Departments throughout state government, in coordinating efforts to improve the lives of children throughout the state. This includes work on the overarching goal of ensuring all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. The legislature also established the Maine Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council (CCECAC) to advise the Children's Cabinet on implementation of early childhood policy and programming to support the effective delivery of services and education to young children. The CCECAC includes representatives from the Department of Education, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services.

We wanted you to be aware of the above information as you consider this bill going forward. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Todd A. Landry in black ink.

Dr. Todd A. Landry, Director
Office of Child and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Handwritten signature of Megan Welter in black ink.

Megan Welter, Associate Commissioner
Public Education
Department of Education