

# Putting Students First

## THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATION AGENDA

### An Act to Enhance Career and Technical Education

- Requires school districts that share a common Career and Technical center to develop a common school calendar with no more than 5 dissimilar days.
- Ensures that the academic credits students earn while attending classes at Career and Technical centers are recognized by their home high schools.
- Establishes a process whereby the Maine Community College System will review state and nationally certified programs at the Career and Technical centers and determine the amount of transferrable college credit students can earn by successfully completing them.

### An Act to Expand School Choice Options for Maine Families

- Strengthens existing superintendent agreement language to ensure that the only criterion that superintendents consider in deciding student transfers is the best interest of the student.
- Establishes a new *Schools of Choice* open enrollment program
  - School districts and private schools approved to receive public tuition funding can choose to become *Schools of Choice* by opening their enrollment to students from other school districts.
  - *Schools of Choice* are allowed to determine how many students they are prepared to accept for the coming school year. A student in any district can apply to attend any *School of Choice* in the state during an enrollment window in the spring, and must be allowed to attend the *School of Choice* to which he or she has been accepted. Once enrolled in a *School of Choice*, students need not reapply each year, they are considered a resident of the district from that point forward.
  - If the number of students applying to attend *School of Choice* exceeds the number of available slots, a random selection process must be used. *Schools of Choice* may not “cherry-pick” students from other schools and districts.
  - In the case of a transfer to another public school, the student transferring to the open enrollment school technically becomes a resident of the receiving district for the purposes of state funding.
    - In the first year a student attends a public *School of Choice*, there is no impact on funding. The sending school keeps the “count” for that year. No funding flows to the receiving district.
    - In the second year, the student is “counted” for the purpose of state funding as having transferred to a new district and is recognized in the state allocation.
  - In the case of a transfer to a private school approved to receive public funding, the student remains in the sending district’s count, and the district pays tuition directly to the private school.
  - Because a student attending a *School of Choice* is considered to have transferred to the receiving district, the receiving district is considered to have responsibility under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide special education services. In the first year, the receiving district bills the sending district for special education costs, in the second year, once the student appears in the “count,” the *School of Choice* is responsible for special education costs.
  - Parents are responsible for transportation to a *School of Choice*, though *Schools of Choice* and their districts can decide to provide transportation services for open enrollment students.

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### **An Act to Remove Inequity in the Funding of Certain Schools**

- Removes statutory language that prohibits public tuition dollars from going to private religious schools that would otherwise be approved for the receipt of such funding.

### **An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership**

- Consistent with the ESEA flexibility package put forward by the U.S. Department of Education, this bill would require school districts to develop or adopt and then implement teacher and principal evaluation systems consistent with criteria to be established by the Department through rulemaking.
  - The Department would begin working with stakeholders to develop guidelines this year, with the goal of having final rules adopted a year from now. Districts would develop or adopt evaluation systems during the 2013-2014 school year, pilot them during the 2014-2015 school year, and fully implement them during the 2015-2016 school year at the latest.
  - Such systems shall use multiple measures of effectiveness, including student achievement and growth as a significant factor, must be conducted regularly, and must provide specific, timely and relevant feedback to teachers and principals that is used to direct and support professional growth.
  - Once in place, such systems are to be used for, among other things, making personnel and staffing decisions, including reduction in force decisions.
  - "Probationary teacher" is redefined in law as a teacher who has not completed three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness or a non-probationary teacher who has demonstrated two consecutive years of demonstrated ineffectiveness, as defined by the law and by Department rules.
  - Includes language establishing "Implementation of Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems" as a category of targeted funds under the Essential Programs and Services System, and authorizes the Commissioner to calculate an amount to be used to address evaluation system costs.
- Requires the State Board of Education to develop a comprehensive alternative educator certification process for those who have not completed an approved educator preparation program, but who have the academic and content area expertise that, given proper pedagogical training in a clinical school setting, could make them effective teachers.
- Instructs the state Department of Education to begin collecting data on Maine's educator preparation programs, including the number of program graduates, the number who then go on to become certified teachers, and the number who remain in teaching at three years and at five years.
- Strengthens certification requirements for math and literacy in the elementary grades and content area knowledge in the middle grades.

### **Investing in Innovation and Building Regional Capacities**

- The Department's Supplemental Budget proposal includes a \$5 million investment in the Fund for Efficient Delivery of Educational Services, to be used to support district-led efforts to increase regionalization and collaboration and to develop innovative schools and districts.