

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 1043

H.P. 773

House of Representatives, February 28, 2019

An Act To Establish Universal Public Preschool Programs

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative KORNFIELD of Bangor.
Cosponsored by Senator MILLETT of Cumberland and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DAUGHTRY of Brunswick, DODGE of Belfast,
FARNSWORTH of Portland, MASTRACCIO of Sanford, McCREIGHT of Harpswell,
PIERCE of Falmouth, SCHNECK of Bangor.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4501, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 581, §4, is further
3 amended to read:

4 In accordance with the policy expressed in section 2, every school administrative unit
5 shall raise annually sufficient funds to maintain or support elementary and secondary
6 schools to provide free education for its resident students at all grade levels. These
7 schools shall meet the requirements of basic school approval. To the extent the State
8 provides adequate start-up funding, a school administrative unit may offer an opportunity
9 for every child 4 years of age residing in the school administrative unit to attend a public
10 preschool program, or a program affiliated with the school administrative unit, meeting
11 the requirements of basic school approval. It is the goal of the State to provide adequate
12 start-up funding to ensure that public preschool programs for children 4 years of age are
13 offered by all school administrative units by the ~~2018-2019~~ 2020-2021 school year.

14 **Sec. 2. Development of recommendations; report.** In order to meet the goal
15 of ensuring that public preschool programs for children 4 years of age are offered by all
16 school administrative units by the 2020-2021 school year in accordance with the Maine
17 Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4501, the Department of Education shall develop
18 recommendations, including recommended legislation, for the implementation of
19 universal public preschool for children 4 years of age. The recommendations must
20 include, but are not limited to:

- 21 1. Standards for public preschool programs;
- 22 2. A process for approval and certification of programs not operated by a school
23 administrative unit, including, but not limited to, a Head Start program or other program
24 affiliated with the school administrative unit; and
- 25 3. Funding for public preschool programs.

26 No later than January 1, 2020, the Department of Education shall submit a report of
27 its recommendations, including recommended legislation, to the Joint Standing
28 Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. The joint standing committee may report
29 out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature to implement the
30 recommendations included in the report.

31 **SUMMARY**

32 This bill specifies that it is the goal of the State to ensure that public preschool
33 programs for children 4 years of age are offered by all school administrative units by the
34 2020-2021 school year. In order to achieve that goal, this bill requires the Department of
35 Education to develop recommendations and report back to the Joint Standing Committee
36 on Education and Cultural Affairs by January 1, 2020. Recommendations must include:

- 37 1. Standards for public preschool programs;

1 2. A process for approval and certification of programs not operated by a school
2 administrative unit, including, but not limited to, a Head Start program or other program
3 affiliated with the school administrative unit; and

4 3. Funding for public preschool programs.

5 The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may report out
6 legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature to implement the
7 recommendations in the report.