

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 98

H.P. 63

House of Representatives, January 8, 2025

An Act to Include School Counselors in the Educators for Maine Program

Submitted by the Department of Education pursuant to Joint Rule 204.
Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative BRENNAN of Portland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §12501-A, sub-§12**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 303, §2, is
3 further amended to read:

4 **12. Return service.** "Return service" means service in a public elementary or
5 secondary school, publicly supported secondary school, special education facility as
6 defined in section 7001, subsection 6 or private school in this State approved for tuition
7 purposes for a full school year as a certified teacher or school counselor or a licensed speech
8 pathologist, service as a Jobs for Maine's Graduates specialist with similar teacher
9 certification or service for a 12-month period in a child care facility by an individual who
10 has attained child care provider qualifications.

11 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §12501-A, sub-§13**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 427, §2, is
12 amended to read:

13 **13. Student pursuing postbaccalaureate certification.** "Student pursuing
14 postbaccalaureate certification" means a student who has earned a baccalaureate degree or
15 its equivalent and is pursuing a program of study leading to certification as a teacher or
16 school counselor or licensure as a speech pathologist or to the attainment of child care
17 provider qualifications.

18 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §12501-A, sub-§14-A**, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 303, §3, is
19 amended to read:

20 **14-A. Underserved geographic areas.** "Underserved geographic areas" means those
21 geographic areas of the State where there is an insufficient supply of teachers, school
22 counselors or speech pathologists as determined by the chief executive officer in
23 consultation with the commissioner.

24 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §12502**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 303, §4, is further amended
25 to read:

26 **§12502. Educators for Maine Program**

27 There is established the Educators for Maine Program to provide financial assistance
28 for postsecondary education to undergraduate students and students pursuing
29 postbaccalaureate certification who demonstrate academic achievement and an interest in
30 pursuing a career in teaching, school counseling, speech pathology or child care in this
31 State. The chief executive officer shall administer the program and shall establish pursuant
32 to rules of the authority the rates of interest or fees to be charged.

33 Under the program, the authority may annually award a certain number of loan
34 repayments to selected educators and other school personnel under this section in
35 underserved geographic areas as funds permit. A selected loan repayment recipient must
36 enter into a loan repayment agreement with the authority and may receive payment from
37 the authority on the recipient's outstanding student debt for each year of service as long as
38 the recipient ~~teaches~~ works in a school in an underserved geographic area.

39 **Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §12505, sub-§3**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 427, §8, is further
40 amended to read:

41 **3. Eligibility for postbaccalaureate certification.** A loan to a student pursuing
42 postbaccalaureate certification may be given only to a resident of the State who has shown

1 academic achievement, who has a baccalaureate degree, who is pursuing a course of study
2 that will lead to certification as a teacher or school counselor, to licensure as a speech
3 pathologist or to attainment of child care provider qualifications and who has met other
4 eligibility criteria established by rule of the authority.

5 **Sec. 6. 20-A MRSA §12507, sub-§3**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 427, §10, is
6 further amended to read:

7 **3. Deferment.** A recipient of a loan may seek a deferment of the annual payments for
8 a period or periods as established by rule of the authority. A request for deferment must
9 be made to the chief executive officer who shall make a determination on a case-by-case
10 basis. The chief executive officer may grant a deferment in the event that a recipient of a
11 loan evidences intent to ~~teach~~ work as a teacher, school counselor or speech pathologist
12 and inability to secure employment necessary to obtain forgiveness of the loan at the time
13 the deferment is sought. The chief executive officer shall require certification of the intent
14 annually and grant a deferment for each successful request for deferment for a period not
15 to exceed one year. The chief executive officer may establish limits to the number of
16 deferments that may be granted to any recipient by rule of the authority.

17 SUMMARY

18 This bill adds school counselor as a postbaccalaureate certification pursuit that is
19 eligible for financial assistance under the Educators for Maine Program administered by
20 the Finance Authority of Maine.