

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 1474**

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H.P. 966

House of Representatives, April 3, 2025

### **An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative OSHER of Orono.  
Cosponsored by Senator TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland and  
Representatives: BECK of South Portland, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Speaker  
FECTEAU of Biddeford, MITCHELL of Cumberland, SATO of Gorham, Senators: President  
DAUGHTRY of Cumberland, HICKMAN of Kennebec, MOORE of Washington.

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

2               **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §14** is enacted to read:

3       **§14. Wabanaki studies specialist**

4               The Wabanaki studies specialist, referred to in this section as "the specialist," is  
5       established in the department to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in the parameters  
6       for essential instruction and graduation requirements as required by section 4706,  
7       subsection 4.

8               **1. Duties.** The specialist, in consultation with the contracted Wabanaki advisors, shall:

9               A. Assist school administrative units and educators in the exploration of a wide range  
10              of educational materials and resources relating to Wabanaki studies;

11              B. Identify materials and resources for implementing the instruction of Wabanaki  
12              studies;

13              C. Involve organizations and individuals able and willing to assist with the  
14              requirements under this subsection, including, but not limited to, museums and  
15              educators; and

16              D. Make recommendations to the department regarding:

17                      (1) Wabanaki studies curricula;

18                      (2) Funding the instruction of Wabanaki studies in school administrative units;

19                      (3) Wabanaki studies courses that count toward the requirements of teacher  
20                      certification; and

21                      (4) Implementation of teacher education programs and summer teacher institutes.

22               **2. Reporting.** The specialist shall annually report to the commissioner and the Maine  
23       Indian Tribal-State Commission regarding the implementation of the instruction of  
24       Wabanaki studies as required by section 4706, subsection 4 and regarding:

25              A. Educational materials and resources that are appropriate to assist school  
26              administrative units and educators in the State to include Wabanaki studies as required  
27              by section 4706, subsection 4; and

28              B. Opportunities for professional development, training and technical assistance that  
29              must be provided to assist school administrative units and educators in the State in  
30              implementing Wabanaki studies as required by section 4706, subsection 4.

31               The department shall provide ongoing funding for the work of the specialist as well as  
32       contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation of Wabanaki studies across  
33       the State as required by section 4706, subsection 4, including funding that school  
34       administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources.

35               **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §4706, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 247, §1 and affected  
36       by §3, is further amended to read:

37               Instruction in American history, African American studies, government, citizenship,  
38       Maine studies ~~and~~, the history of genocide and Wabanaki studies must be aligned with the  
39       parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements established under section  
40       6209.

**Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §4706, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2023, c. 537, §2, is further amended to read:

**2. Maine studies.** Maine history, including the Constitution of Maine, Maine geography and environment and the natural, industrial and economic resources of Maine and Maine's cultural and ethnic heritage, must be taught. ~~A required component of Maine studies is Wabanaki studies, and Wabanaki studies may be taught as a component of other content areas, as appropriate, including but not limited to the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and fine arts. Wabanaki studies and Maine African American studies must be included in the review of content standards and performance indicators of the learning results conducted in accordance with section 6209, subsection 4. Wabanaki studies must address the following topics:~~

A. Wabanaki governments and political systems and their relationship with local, state, national and international governments;

~~B. Wabanaki cultural systems and the experience of tribal people throughout history;~~

~~C. Wabanaki territories; and~~

~~D. Wabanaki economic systems.~~

**Sec. 4. 20-A M RSA §4706, sub-§4 is enacted to read:**

**4. Wabanaki studies.** Wabanaki studies must be included in the review of content standards and performance indicators of the learning results conducted in accordance with section 6209, subsection 4. Wabanaki studies may include social studies, English language arts, mathematics, science and fine arts in accordance with this subsection. Wabanaki studies must address the following topics:

A. Tribal governments in the State and political systems and their relationship with local, state, national and international governments;

B. Wabanaki cultural systems and the experience of tribal people in the State throughout history;

C. Wabanaki territories;

D. Wabanaki economic systems; and

E. Other curricula recommended by the Wabanaki studies specialist pursuant to section 14.

The department shall, in a representative sample of schools, periodically study the Wabanaki studies curricula under this subsection to assess its implementation. The department shall publish its findings on the department's publicly accessible website.

**Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §13011, sub-§11 is enacted to read:**

**11. Wabanaki studies requirement.** The state board shall adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies component in the qualifications for certifying teachers in accordance with sections 13012-A and 13013.

**Sec. 6. 20-A MRS** **A c. 513** is enacted to read:

## CHAPTER 513

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**TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN WABANAKI STUDIES**

**§13961. Teacher education programs**

The department shall provide funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors and educators to work with the Wabanaki studies specialist pursuant to section 14 to create and implement short-term courses that must be made available to all teachers throughout the State. The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

**SUMMARY**

This bill establishes the position of Wabanaki studies specialist in the Department of Education to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in the parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements and requires the department to provide ongoing funding for the work of the specialist as well as contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation of the instruction of Wabanaki studies across the State, including funding that school administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources. The bill also directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies component in the qualifications for certifying teachers and requires the department to provide funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors and educators to work with the Wabanaki studies specialist to create and implement short-term courses that must be made available to all teachers throughout the State.