

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1689

H.P. 1124

House of Representatives, April 17, 2025

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Expansion of Public Preschool and Early Care and Education

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 HASENFUS of Readfield.
Cosponsored by Senator PIERCE of Cumberland and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CROCKETT of Portland, Speaker FECTEAU of
Biddeford, MURPHY of Scarborough, Senators: President DAUGHTRY of Cumberland,
LIBBY of Cumberland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4273** is enacted to read:

3 **§4273. Elementary schools to include area for preschool or child care**

4 A public elementary school constructed after October 1, 2025 must include an area that
5 may be used for preschool instruction or child care.

6 **Sec. 2. Department of Education to revise essential programs and services**
7 **funding formula.** The Department of Education shall revise the essential programs and
8 services funding formula under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 606-B
9 regarding the method it uses to fund preschool instruction to use a method similar to that
10 used for funding kindergarten instruction in order to provide incentives to school
11 administrative units to provide full-day preschool instruction.

12 **Sec. 3. Department of Education to study early childhood education**
13 **credentialing procedures and policies.** The Department of Education shall study early
14 childhood educator and provider credentialing procedures and policies as they relate to
15 nursery school teachers, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers and elementary school
16 teachers. The department shall identify barriers to the expansion of preschool programs in
17 this State and recommend improvements to early childhood educator and provider
18 credentialing procedures and policies that would provide greater flexibility in credentialing
19 and facilitate the expansion of preschool programs by school administrative units.

20 **Sec. 4. Department of Health and Human Services to study standards and**
21 **rules for early childhood educators and providers.** The Department of Health and
22 Human Services, in collaboration with the Department of Education and stakeholders, shall
23 study the standards and rules for early childhood educators and providers in order to better
24 align standards and rules across all early childhood educators and providers and reduce
25 barriers to the expansion of preschool programs and the provision of early childhood
26 education services.

27 **Sec. 5. Reports.** The Department of Education and the Department of Health and
28 Human Services shall each report their findings under sections 3 and 4, including any
29 suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
30 and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than December
31 3, 2025. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint
32 Standing Committee on Health and Human Services may each report out legislation based
33 on the reports to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

34 **Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
35 allocations are made.

36 **EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**

37 **Early Childhood Infrastructure Z315**

38 Initiative: Provides ongoing funds to establish 4 Education Specialist II positions to serve
39 as regional coordinators to work with schools and potential partners in different regions of
40 the State that are looking to start or expand public preschool programs.

41 GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
42 POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	4.000	4.000

1	Personal Services	\$342,690	\$463,597
2	All Other	\$37,312	\$37,312
3			
4	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$380,002	\$500,909
5	Early Childhood Infrastructure Z315		
6	Initiative: Provides one-time funds in fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for a preschool		
7	expansion grant program.		
8	GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
9	All Other	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
10			
11	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
12			
13	EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF		
14	DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2025-26	2026-27
15			
16	GENERAL FUND	\$2,380,002	\$2,500,909
17			
18	DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$2,380,002	\$2,500,909

19 **SUMMARY**

20 This bill implements the recommendations of the Commission to Study Expansion of
21 Public Preschool and Early Care and Education, which was established pursuant to Public
22 Law 2023, chapter 477. It provides that a public elementary school constructed after
23 October 1, 2025 must include an area that may be used for preschool instruction or child
24 care.

25 It directs the Department of Education to revise the essential programs and services
26 funding formula regarding the method it uses to fund preschool instruction to use a method
27 similar to that used for funding kindergarten instruction in order to provide incentives to
28 school administrative units to provide full-day preschool instruction.

29 It directs the Department of Education to study early childhood educator and provider
30 credentialing procedures and policies as they relate to nursery school teachers, preschool
31 teachers, kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers. The department is required
32 to identify barriers to the expansion of preschool programs in this State and recommend
33 improvements to early childhood educator and provider credentialing procedures and
34 policies that would provide greater flexibility in credentialing and facilitate the expansion
35 of preschool programs by school administrative units.

36 It directs the Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the
37 Department of Education and stakeholders, to study the standards and rules for early
38 childhood educators and providers in order to better align standards and rules across early
39 childhood educators and providers and reduce barriers to the expansion of preschool
40 programs and the provision of early childhood education services.

41 It requires the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human
42 Services to each report their findings, including any suggested legislation, to the Joint
43 Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee

1 on Health and Human Services no later than December 3, 2025. The Joint Standing
2 Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health
3 and Human Services each may report out legislation based on the reports to the Second
4 Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

5 The bill provides funding to establish 4 regional coordinator positions in the
6 Department of Education to work with schools and potential partners in different regions
7 of the State that are looking to start or expand public preschool programs. The bill also
8 provides a total of \$4,000,000 for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for a preschool
9 expansion grant program.