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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 2017-001
DATE January 2, 2017

**AN ORDER REGARDING SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE
EFFICIENCIES IN DELIVERING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

WHEREAS, for fiscal year 2014-15, state and local expenditures for public education surpassed \$2.2 billion representing an increase of almost \$480 million (twenty-seven percent) over the past ten years, while at the same time student enrollment has decreased by 23,000 students (eleven percent);

WHEREAS, per pupil costs during this same time increased by almost forty-three percent; and

WHEREAS, the People of Maine have regularly voiced support for property tax relief and that education dollars be prioritized for the classroom rather than for administration; and

WHEREAS, Maine school boards have voiced support for efforts that would enable voluntary joint efforts to improve educational outcomes for students and eliminating unnecessary legal barriers to cooperation among the different types of Maine school units; and

WHEREAS, current state support for school construction does not adequately provide opportunities for integrated regional collaborative solutions; and

WHEREAS, not all of the \$1 billion appropriated in the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year budget for General Purpose Aid for Local Schools based on projected costs has been expended; and


WHEREAS, funds appropriated to General Purpose Aid for Local Schools must be provided to school administrative units pursuant to 20-A MRS §15671(7)(C) and established in Public Law 2015 Chapter 389, Part C as amended by Public Law 2015 Chapter 481, Part D; and

WHEREAS, the Administration will be pursuing legislation to authorize the creation of regional education service agencies to remove barriers and promote the sharing of educational programs and services in order to support communities that seek to improve cost efficiency and enhance educational services provided for the benefit of Maine students;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby direct the Department of Education to undertake following actions:

1. Review the budgeted General Purpose Aid for Local Schools costs and identify funds that will not be dispersed as anticipated (e.g., debt service payments, sudden and severe adjustment) nor be needed to fund other General Purpose Aid anticipated costs;
2. Pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. § 15689-F(1), transfer the identified funds to be used for General Purpose Aid for Local Schools regionalization, consolidation and efficiency assistance adjustment purposes under 20-A M.R.S. § 15689(9); and
3. Develop a competitive process to award these funds to School Administrative Units prior to the end of the 2016-17 Fiscal Year to assist with the upfront costs associated with efforts that promote economic efficiencies within and across schools and districts that enhance the delivery of educational services for the benefit of Maine students.
4. Draft and submit proposed legislation to the 128th Legislature establishing regional education service agencies to remove barriers and promote the sharing of educational programs and services; and
5. Develop and release an application for integrated regional school models.
6. Draft and submit proposed legislation to the 128th Legislature authorizing a bond to cover debt service for innovative construction integrated regional school models.

The effective date of this Executive Order is January 2, 2017.


Paul R. LePage, Governor