



125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2011

Legislative Document

No. 977

H.P. 721

House of Representatives, March 8, 2011

Resolve, To Analyze the Value of Distance Learning in a Rural Environment

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

Heath & Print

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST Clerk

Presented by Representative JOHNSON of Greenville. Cosponsored by Senator THOMAS of Somerset and Representative: KUMIEGA of Deer Isle. 1 Sec. 1. Department of Education to analyze potential of distance learning. 2 **Resolved:** That the Department of Education shall analyze the potential of distance 3 learning via the Internet to support expanded curriculum opportunities statewide and, in particular, for rural communities with small schools. As part of the analysis, the 4 5 Department of Education shall establish 2 pilot programs to run in the spring semester of 2012 and be paid for by existing department resources, participating school 6 administrative units or private contractors interested in establishing an online educational 7 8 program or school in the State. The analysis of distance learning via the Internet must 9 address:

10

1. The effectiveness and cost of the distance learning;

- The impact of the distance learning on the structure of educational districts and on
 the teaching workforce; and
- 13

3. The feasibility of establishing an online high school; and be it further

14 Sec. 2. Department of Education to develop legislation to make distance 15 learning a top priority in the State. Resolved: That the Department of Education, 16 in conducting the analysis required in section 1, shall coordinate with school 17 administrators, teachers, parents and other interested parties to develop proposed 18 legislation that defines the requirements and policies necessary to make distance learning 19 via the Internet a top priority in the State; and be it further

Sec. 3. Department of Education to develop legislation to allow for open enrollment in distance learning via the Internet. Resolved: That the Department of Education shall develop legislation to allow the enrollment of a student from one school administrative unit in an educational course offered via the Internet by another school administrative unit upon permission from both school administrative units; and be it further

Sec. 4. Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 15, 2013, the Department of Education shall submit its findings under section 1 along with any suggested implementing legislation developed under this resolve to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may submit a bill regarding the analysis required under this resolve to the First Regular Session of the 126th Legislature.

33

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Education to conduct an analysis of distance learning via the Internet statewide and for rural communities by establishing 2 pilot programs in the spring semester of 2012 and analyzing distance learning's cost, effectiveness and impact on the structure of educational districts and the teaching workforce and the feasibility of establishing an online high school. This resolve also requires the Department of Education to develop legislation to allow enrollment of a student from one school administrative unit in an educational course offered via the

- Internet by another school administrative unit and to make distance learning via the Internet a top priority in the State. 1
- 2