

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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126th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2014

Legislative Document

No. 1736

S.P. 689

In Senate, January 16, 2014

**Resolve, To Create a State-run Virtual Academy Providing Maine
Students with Access to Online Learning through Their Existing
School Districts**

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator LANGLEY of Hancock.
Cosponsored by Representative HUBBELL of Bar Harbor and
Senators: MILLETT of Cumberland, SAVIELLO of Franklin, Representatives: DAUGHTRY
of Brunswick, JOHNSON of Greenville, MAKER of Calais, NELSON of Falmouth,
POULIOT of Augusta.

1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** it is crucial the Department of Education begin its work as soon as
4 possible to ensure the department has sufficient time to obtain information and develop
5 plans regarding the establishment of a state-run virtual academy; and

6 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
7 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
8 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
9 therefore, be it

10 **Sec. 1. State-run virtual academy. Resolved:** That the Department of
11 Education shall establish a state-administered virtual academy providing all public
12 schools in the State access to online courses for their students. The department shall
13 design the virtual academy in collaboration with associations representing school
14 administrators, teachers, school boards and others involved in public education. In
15 designing the virtual academy, the department shall:

16 1. Ensure the virtual academy provides for a blended learning environment that
17 offers access to virtual classes along with traditional classroom-based instruction;

18 2. Place particular emphasis on enhancing curriculum and addressing potential
19 scheduling obstacles, including scheduling obstacles that may be encountered by students
20 in career and technical education programs; and

21 3. Use as models the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative and the Virtual
22 Learning Academy Charter School in New Hampshire.

23 The department shall complete the design of the virtual academy by August 1, 2015,
24 and the virtual academy must be operational by August 1, 2016; and be it further

25 **Sec. 2. Legislation. Resolved:** That, by December 1, 2015, the Department of
26 Education shall submit any necessary legislation to implement section 1 of this resolve to
27 the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education
28 matters; and be it further

29 **Sec. 3. Moratorium. Resolved:** That the Maine Charter School Commission,
30 established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 10-D,
31 may not authorize a virtual public charter school and a local school board may not
32 authorize a public charter school within its jurisdiction that integrates online and on-site
33 instruction until after a state-administered virtual academy established by the Department
34 of Education pursuant to section 1 is operational.

35 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this
36 legislation takes effect when approved.

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SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Education to establish a virtual academy administered by the State providing all public schools in the State access to online courses for their students and to submit implementing legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. It also imposes a moratorium on the authorization of virtual public charter schools and public charter schools that integrate online and on-site instruction until after the virtual academy administered by the State is operational.