

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1682

H.P. 1081

House of Representatives, April 18, 2023

An Act to Create the Maine Experiential Education Program

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry suggested and ordered printed.


ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative SHAW of Auburn.
Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and
Representatives: CRAY of Palmyra, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of Wilton, JACKSON
of Oxford, JAUCH of Topsham, OSHER of Orono, PLUECKER of Warren, Senator: BLACK
of Franklin.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 7 MRSA c. 10-E** is enacted to read:

3 **CHAPTER 10-E**

4 **MAINE EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

5 **§320-T. Definitions**

6 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms
7 have the following meanings.

8 **1. Farm and sea to school learning program.** "Farm and sea to school learning
9 program" means a program that incorporates agricultural-based education, hands-on
10 learning through school gardens and increased access to local foods through local
11 procurement by school meal programs; improves access to local seafood sourcing by
12 school meal programs; and provides seafood education in schools.

13 **2. Fund.** "Fund" means the Maine Experiential Education Program Fund established
14 in section 320-V.

15 **3. Program.** "Program" means the Maine Experiential Education Program established
16 in section 320-U.

17 **4. Public school.** "Public school" has the same meaning as in Title 20-A, section 1,
18 subsection 24.

19 **5. School administrative unit.** "School administrative unit" has the same meaning as
20 in Title 20-A, section 1, subsection 26 and includes a public school.

21 **6. Student.** "Student" means an individual enrolled in prekindergarten to grade 12 in
22 a public school or school administrative unit.

23 **§320-U. Maine Experiential Education Program**

24 **1. Program established.** The Maine Experiential Education Program is established.
25 The department shall administer the program. In administering the program, the department
26 may collaborate with the Department of Education and other state agencies and nonprofit
27 organizations that support farm and sea to school learning programs, local procurement and
28 other experiential learning initiatives in public schools and school administrative units.

29 **2. Purposes.** The program shall:

30 A. Develop and manage a grant program to help public schools and school
31 administrative units create staff positions that support:

32 (1) The learning and academic development of students by ensuring that public
33 schools and school administrative units interested in the program have the capacity
34 necessary to provide experiential hands-on learning;

35 (2) The health and physical development of students by ensuring that public
36 schools and school administrative units interested in the program have the capacity
37 necessary to help students build connections between the food that they and their
38 communities produce and the food that they prepare and eat; and

1 (3) The emotional and behavioral development of students by ensuring that public
2 schools and school administrative units interested in the program have the capacity
3 necessary to build, expand and maintain school gardens and other experiential
4 learning spaces; and

5 B. Provide ongoing support to public school educators engaged in hands-on
6 experiential education initiatives for continued education and professional
7 development opportunities.

8 **§320-V. Maine Experiential Education Program Fund**

9 **1. Fund established.** The Maine Experiential Education Program Fund is established
10 within the department. The fund is nonlapsing and may be invested in the same manner as
11 permitted for investment of other state funds. The fund must be held separate and apart
12 from all other money, funds and accounts. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end
13 of the fiscal year must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

14 **2. Use of fund.** The department shall use money in the fund to:

15 A. Provide multiyear grants to public schools and school administrative units to help
16 establish experiential education positions and outdoor educator positions within the
17 schools and school administrative units through a cost-sharing agreement with the
18 following provisions.

19 (1) In the first grant year, the fund covers full salary and benefits, or stipend, of a
20 position; in the 2nd grant year, the fund covers 2/3 the cost for salary and benefits,
21 or stipend, for the same position and the public school or school administrative unit
22 covers 1/3 of the cost; in the 3rd grant year, the fund covers 1/3 of the cost of salary
23 and benefits, or stipend, for the same position and the public school or school
24 administrative unit covers 2/3; and in subsequent years the public school or school
25 administrative unit covers the full cost of salary and benefits, or stipend, for the
26 same or similar position.

27 (2) Grants must be made to public schools and school administrative units in a
28 manner that ensures the public schools and school administrative units create
29 outdoor educator positions that meet the outdoor, experiential or farm and sea to
30 school education needs of the public schools and school administrative units.

31 (3) Grants must be developed and dispersed so that public schools and school
32 administrative units gradually assume full financial responsibility for the positions
33 described in subparagraphs (1) and (2) over a period not to exceed 3 years from the
34 awarding of the grant for any individual public school or school administrative
35 unit.

36 In distributing money from the fund, the department shall prioritize opportunities to
37 expand the range of positions funded by the fund, including such positions as stipend
38 garden coaches, educational technicians and teachers; and

39 B. Provide for a staff person within the department to administer the program and the
40 fund.

41 **3. Fund sources.** The following must be paid into the fund:

42 A. All money appropriated or allocated by the Legislature for inclusion in the fund;

