

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Date: January 2, 2020

Source of Report: Letter from the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee regarding LD 137

Topic: Examine the Future of MLTI

Context

The following background is found in the [MLTI History](#) page of the Maine Department of Education Webpages:

The concept of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI) began with a vision of former Governor Angus King to prepare Maine's students for a rapidly changing world.

In speaking with other governors, Governor King realized that all states were undertaking very similar investments in areas like education and economic development, and if Maine wanted to jump ahead of these other states, it would require a sharp departure from what Maine had done in the past. Immediately, everyone recognized that education represented the most crucial area for this major change and Governor King recalled a conversation he had had with Seymour Papert, an expert on how technology can provide new ways to learn, where the idea of how to transform education was discussed. During their conversation, Papert convinced King that a major transformation would happen only when student and teachers worked with technology on a 1:1 basis and that any other ratio would not produce the transformation everyone sought.

In late 1999 and early 2000, a one-time state surplus enabled Maine to make the dramatic step of announcing a plan to equip all of its middle school students and teachers with a personal learning device. After the initial public reaction to the plan, it became clear that more discussion and examination of this concept was needed and thus in the summer of 2000 the Legislature and Governor convened a Joint Task Force on the Maine Learning Technology Endowment and recommended the best course for Maine to follow.

In early 2001, the Task Force issued its report, ["Teaching and Learning for Tomorrow: A Learning Technology Plan for Maine's Future."](#) The report included a recommendation that Maine pursue a plan to deploy learning technology to all students and teachers in 7th and 8th grade, with possible expansion to other grade levels. The Task Force report also included several guiding principles which have been embedded into the work of MLTI. During that spring legislation was authorized to begin the program for the school year beginning in September, 2002.

In late September 2001, the Department of Education issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for MLTI and after scoring all of the proposals, selected Apple Computer, Inc. as the winning bidder. In late December 2001 the Department and Apple formally began to implement the Maine Learning Technology Initiative.

In the Spring of 2002, legislation was enacted to start the program for the school year beginning in September of that year. That first year brought over 17,000 devices to students and educators in the 7th and 8th grade classrooms (sic). [MLTI was fully implemented in all 7th grade public school classrooms in Maine in the fall of 2002. Implementation of the initiative in the 8th grade followed in 2003 (Muir et al.)]

In January of 2006, the Department of Education issued a second RFP for MLTI after four successful years of the program, to refresh and update the program as technology was rapidly changing.

In 2009, MLTI expanded into high schools. The expansion was part of an agreement the State Department of Education negotiated with Apple Inc. for a reduced rate on the laptops, allowing the state to lease up to 100,000 machines within existing funds dedicated to educational technology. Under the agreement, districts could purchase laptops for high schoolers and the state could replace older machines at the middle school level. School districts were not required to participate in the program, though superintendents indicated overwhelming support for the laptop expansion.

The expansion led to an order placed for the largest education technology program of its kind. The Maine Department of Education announced in 2009 that it placed orders for more than 70,000 MacBooks for students and faculty in grades 7 through 12.

In 2012, MLTI issued the third RFP to empower the fourth generation of the program (MLTI IV). For the first time, MLTI expanded to include multiple platforms, both laptop computers and tablets provided by multiple technology-solution providers, Apple and HP.

Beginning in the Spring of 2017, MLTI began offering direct grants to schools as an alternative to offering pre-determined packages from vendors. A school was eligible for a grant if:

- It has 7th and 8th grade students and staff who are not already participating in MLTI through a 2016 opt-in;
- It is a high school that provides devices for its students, but wants a grant to provide devices for staff;
- It is a career and technical education (CTE) center or region that is not already participating in MLTI through 2016 opt-in.

The amount of the grant was \$200 per year for 3 years, for each eligible student or staff member. Grant recipients must provide a personal portable device for each eligible student and staff member, and are expected to manage, maintain and repair those devices. In addition, recipients are expected to provide professional development for staff to ensure that the devices are used effectively. Grant funds could be used for the cost of devices, accessories, professional development, technical support and infrastructure needed to conduct an educational technology program.

Current Status

The final contracts for the existing MLTI program are set to expire on June 30, 2020. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Department has designed a “bridge year,” to provide support for devices, infrastructure, and professional learning while we continue to work with stakeholders to

design what is the next phase of the MLTI program. With the support of the 129th legislature, the Department has designed the bridge year to mitigate and minimize disruption to SAUs. The details of the bridge year are the following:

- The Department will purchase all of the MLTI devices at the end of the lease.
- The Department will transfer ownership to SAUs in cohort 4 (lease begun in 2016) for 7th & 8th grade and staff devices in July 2020. JAMF licenses on these devices will continue at no charge to SAUs through June 30, 2021. Systems Engineering will continue to support the Wi-Fi infrastructure of 7th and 8th grade classrooms during the bridge year.
- SAUs who are currently leasing additional devices (elementary or high school student and staff devices) from the Department will have the option to buy out their devices from the Department at the 2015 rates, \$28/ iPad and \$48/ laptop in July 2020. JAMF licenses will be available on these devices for the cost of \$6/ iOS device and \$12/MacOS.
- No new grants will be awarded during the 2020-2021 academic year.
- The Department will provide statewide and regional professional learning,
- The Department will host the MLTI student conference in May 2021.

Over the past several months, the Department has hosted “Think Tank” conversations regionally around the state to reflect on the past 17 years of the MLTI program and envision innovative ideas about the possibilities for the next 20 years of the program. Notes from those think tanks can be found [here](#). The Department will continue to use the additional time afforded by the “bridge year” to meet with stakeholders throughout the state. Discussions will include topics such as portable computer devices, device management and deployment, software, wireless networking, technical support, and professional development, as well as financial models to support these efforts. The Department has also begun to convene an advisory board to synthesize this information and help to create a plan for the state. The advisory board will begin meeting monthly in January 2020.

Below is the estimated timeline for MLTI through 2021.

- June 2019 – August 2020: The Department holds meetings with stakeholders regarding the future of MLTI (post SY 2020-2021) and convenes an advisory board to develop a State plan
- July 2020 – June 30, 2021: Bridge Year
- October 2020: The Department announces plan for MLTI post SY 2020-2021 (including the release of any necessary RFPs)
- July 2021: launch of MLTI 2.0

References

MLTI History (nd). Maine Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/ltt/mlti/history>

Muir, M., Knezek, G., Christensen, R. (2004). The power of one-to-one: Early findings from the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, *Learning and Leading with Technology* 32(3), 6-11.

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ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

March 5, 2019

A. Pender Makin
Commissioner of Education
Maine Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

SUBJ: LD 137, An Act to Make the Maine Learning Technology Initiative More Cost-effective

Dear Commissioner Makin:

As you know, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs recently considered LD 137, *An Act to Make the Maine Learning Technology Initiative More Cost-effective*. This bill is a concept draft, which proposed to make the Maine Learning Technology Initiative ("MLTI") more cost effective. The committee does not feel that legislation to address this issue is necessary at this time, and as such unanimously voted LD 137 "ought not to pass." However, we understand that MLTI has not had a thorough review in recent years, and we believe that it is time for MLTI to be reviewed to examine its future and priorities, as well as to ensure that it has a reasonable budget.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Department of Education establish a workgroup to examine the future of MLTI, including setting priorities and establishing reasonable budgets. In the department's review, we encourage the department to involve stakeholders, such as the Association of Computer Technology Educators of Maine (ACTEM), the Maine School Management Association, and other knowledgeable technician directors, educators, and administrators.

We would also respectfully request that the workgroup report back to the committee next year in conjunction with the reporting requirement on the Maine Learning Technology Fund under Title 20-A, section 19102, which states:

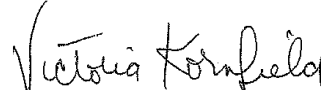
The commissioner shall submit a report that includes findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation to revise and update chapter 606-B and this chapter, for presentation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over appropriations and financial affairs and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by January 31st annually.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Sen. Rebecca J. Millett
Senate Chair



Rep. Victoria P. Kornfield
House Chair

cc: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs