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Date: 9/12/22

Source of Report: Response to committee letter to Commissioner Makin requesting “that the Department of Education examine the recommendations in the [TDAE] report and report back to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on any of the recommendations that may require further legislative action, including funding, to develop or implement.”

Topic: TDAE Report Recommendations

Context

On Thursday, June 16, 2022, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs received a report presentation from the Truancy, Dropout, and Alternative Education Advisory (TDAE) Committee. In response to that report the Joint Standing Committee on Educational and Cultural Affairs requested that the Department of Education (DOE) report back on any of the recommendations that may require further legislative action, including funding, to develop or implement. The DOE has also included a description of current actions addressing the TDAE Committee report recommendations.

Actions

The Department of Education has taken the following actions to address the recommendations from the TDAE Report:

Alternative Ways to Graduation

In order to support the use of the “multiple pathways” (as prescribed in 20-A 4722) as a means towards addressing the awarding of differentiated diplomas to students experiencing major life disruptions, the Department of Education will provide technical assistance to the field. This technical assistance will include sharing successful differentiated diploma models and crafting guidance to support districts in developing differentiated diplomas.

Promotion of Community Schools

The Office of School and Student Supports (OSSS) at the Department of Education will be forming a statewide advisory committee on community schools. The purpose of this advisory group will be to work with stakeholders to develop a vision of Community Schools in Maine and to advocate for that vision. Stakeholders will include a combination of the members from the previous 2018 Community Schools group, interested community-based organizations, and current community school practitioners.

Addressing Chronic Absentee

The DOE is discussing a sole source provider contract with Count ME In. for Count Me In for trainings, guidance, and information for the field focused on understanding and addressing chronic absenteeism. The DOE previously contracted with Count Me In to support an American Rescue Plan project to support children and youth experiencing homelessness. In addition, the OSSS is working to revamp the website to serve as a hub for best practices on engagement and attendance

Recommendations

The DOE recommends that the Committee hears from the TDAE committee again in order to inform any discussions about potential actions.

Contact:

Courtney Belolan
Director of Policy & Government Affairs
207-215-7396
Courtney.belolan@maine.gov

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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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

June 21, 2022

Dear Commissioner Makin:

On Thursday, June 16th, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs received a report presentation from Lenny Holmes, chair of the Truancy, Dropout and Alternative Education Advisory Committee. The report includes the following five recommendations on the development and implementation of state and local policies and programs that are needed to deal effectively with the incidence of truancy and dropouts in state schools:

- 1) Alternative ways to graduation;
- 2) Destigmatizing the 5th year student;
- 3) Keeping Maine's Youth Connected Liaisons statewide;
- 4) Promotion of community schools; and
- 5) Addressing chronic absenteeism.¹

We respectfully request that the Department of Education examine the recommendations included in this report, and report back to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on any of the recommendations that may require further legislative action, including funding, to develop or implement.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter, and we look forward to hearing from you on how to further develop and implement these recommendations.

¹ The full report is available on the Committee's webpage here: <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/8645>

Sincerely,



Sen. Joseph Rafferty
Senate Chair



Rep. Michael F. Brennan
House Chair

cc: Megan Welter, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, MDOE
Bear Shea, Mental Health/School Counselor Specialist, MDOE
Lenny Holmes, Chair, Truancy, Dropout and Alternative Education Advisory Committee