

### **§3003-A. Educator interchange program; period of assignment**

The period of an individual assignment of an educator under an interchange program, authorized under section 3003, between the educator's school administrative unit as the sending agency and the Department of Education as the receiving agency may not exceed ~~24 months nor may any educator be assigned under such an interchange program for more than 24 months during any 36 month period 36 months~~. For the purposes of this section, "educator" means a teacher, principal or other education professional employed by a school administrative unit.

## **PART V**

**Sec. V-1. Lapsed balances.** Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, \$518,714 of unencumbered balance forward from the Legislature, General Fund carrying account, Personal Services line category lapses to the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund no later than June 30, 2025.

## **PART W**

**Sec. W-1. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§1,** as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

**1. Agency.** "Agency" means ~~an a public, quasi-governmental or private~~ agency, school, organization, facility or institution.

**Sec. W-2. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§1-A,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. OO, §1, is further amended to read:

**1-A. Child Development Services System.** "Child Development Services System" means the state intermediate educational unit under section 7209, subsection 3, ~~and any regional sites it chooses to establish and maintain, to ensure the provision of child find activities, early intervention services and, when designated by the commissioner, free, appropriate public education services to eligible children.~~

**Sec. W-3. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§1-D** is enacted to read:

**1-D. Child eligible under Part B, Section 619.** "Child eligible under Part B, Section 619" means a child who is at least 3 years of age and under 6 years of age who has not entered kindergarten and who requires special education and related services in order to access a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

**Sec. W-4. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§2-D** is enacted to read:

**2-D. Individualized family service plan.** "Individualized family service plan" means a plan to provide early intervention services in accordance with Part C to an infant or toddler with a disability or to the infant's or toddler's family in the natural setting.

**Sec. W-5. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§2-E** is enacted to read:

**2-E. Natural setting.** "Natural setting" means the home, child care or other community setting of the infant or toddler with a disability. "Natural setting" does not include a preschool setting.

**Sec. W-6. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§3-A** is enacted to read:

**3-A. Part B, Section 619.** "Part B, Section 619" means Part B, Section 619 of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq.

**Sec. W-7. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§3-B** is enacted to read:

**3-B. Part C.** "Part C" means Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq. under which early intervention services are provided in the natural setting for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Sec. W-8. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§3-C** is enacted to read:

**3-C. Extended Part C option.** "Extended Part C option" means the option under Part C that allows the family of a child eligible under Part B, Section 619 to continue early intervention programming on or after the child's 3rd birthday by remaining in the natural setting and continuing to receive services through an individualized family service plan.

**Sec. W-9. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§4-C** is enacted to read:

**4-C. Regional support and service hub.** "Regional support and service hub" means a support and service hub established by the Child Development Services System in accordance with section 7211.

**Sec. W-10. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§6-A** is enacted to read:

**6-A. State intermediate educational unit.** "State intermediate educational unit" means the Child Development Services System under subsection 1-A.

**Sec. W-11. 20-A MRSA §7006**, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 662, §A20, is amended to read:

#### **§7006. Responsibility**

The Department of Education is designated as the state education agency responsible for carrying out the State's obligations under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq., as amended. The department and every school administrative unit, intermediate educational unit, public school or other public agency that receives federal or state funds to provide early intervention or free, appropriate public education services to children with disabilities shall comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended, and all federal regulations adopted under the Act.

**1. Responsibility for Part C.** The commissioner shall designate responsibility for ensuring child find activities and early intervention services under Part C for children from birth until 3 years of age, or until the start of the school year in which the child is 4 years of age if the extended Part C option is selected by the family of the child, to the Child Development Services System.

**2. Responsibility for Part B, Section 619.** Until June 30, 2028, the commissioner shall designate responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 to the Child Development Services System or to school administrative units in accordance with the transition schedule and supports under section 7209-A. Beginning July 1, 2028, the commissioner shall designate responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 to school administrative units.

**3. Service provision.** A school administrative unit that has been designated to have responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to subsection 2 may directly provide special education and related services to children eligible under Part B, Section 619 and may contract with public and private providers to provide special education and related services. A school administrative unit may also access the school administrative unit's regional support and service hub to provide certain services as delineated in a memorandum of understanding between the department and the school administrative unit.

**4. Exception.** Notwithstanding subsection 2, if the commissioner determines that a school administrative unit is unable to assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to subsection 2, the commissioner may establish a modified plan for that school administrative unit in managing those children.

**5. Annual report.** The department shall report annually by March 1st to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The report must include, for school administrative units, each of the components required of the Child Development Services System pursuant to section 7209, subsection 4, paragraph E. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill related to the report to the session of the Legislature in which the report is received.

**Sec. W-12. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§3,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. OO, §4, is further amended to read:

**3. State intermediate educational unit establishment; administrative functions.** The commissioner shall establish and supervise the state intermediate educational unit. The state intermediate educational unit is established as a body corporate and politic and as a public instrumentality of the State for the purpose of conducting child find activities as provided in 20 United States Code, Section 1412 (a) (3) for children from birth to under 6 years of age; and ensuring the provision of early intervention services for eligible children from birth to under 3 years of age and ensuring for eligible children until the start of the school year when they are 4 years of age if the extended Part C option is selected by the child's family. The state intermediate educational unit shall also ensure a free, appropriate public education for eligible children at least 3 years of age and under 6 years of age, where designated as the responsible agency by the commissioner. The state intermediate educational unit shall perform the following statewide coordination and administration functions:

- A. Establish standard policies and procedures for a statewide salary and benefits administration system, including personnel classifications, position descriptions and salary ranges, and a standard package of health, retirement and other fringe benefits for Child Development Services System personnel, beginning in fiscal year 2006-07;
- B. Develop a statewide salary and benefits administration system and perform the payroll functions for Child Development Services System personnel;
- B-1. Bargain collectively under Title 26, chapter 9-A if the employees of the regional sites choose to be represented by an agent for purposes of collective bargaining. In such circumstances, the state intermediate educational unit must be considered the public employer for purposes of collective bargaining;

- C. Establish a centralized system for statewide fiscal administration to be implemented by September 1, 2006. The state intermediate educational unit shall establish internal controls and implement accounting policies and procedures in accordance with standards set forth by the State Controller;
- D. Develop and implement a centralized data management system to be fully operational beginning July 1, 2007;
- E. Establish a standard, statewide template for regional site contracts with therapeutic service providers, including policies and procedures for the review of contracts, beginning in fiscal year 2006-07;
- F. Refine program accountability standards for compliance with federal mandates, including the development of a performance review system to monitor and improve regional site performance through the use of efficiency ratings aligned with the accountability standards and through a compliance plan that requires the regional site to address the unmet needs of eligible children in accordance with specific targets and time frames;
- G. Design and implement a statewide plan to provide professional development and training to Child Development Services System personnel;
- H. Employ professional and other personnel at the state level and at the regional sites, including those necessary to ensure the implementation of the centralized fiscal and data management systems. All state intermediate educational unit employees are employees for the purposes of the Maine Tort Claims Act; and
- I. Enter into contracts, leases and agreements and any other instruments and arrangements that are necessary, incidental or convenient to the performance of its duties and the execution of its powers under this chapter.

**Sec. W-13. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§3-A**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. AAAAAA, §§1 and 2, is further amended to read:

**3-A. State intermediate educational unit; program functions.** The state intermediate educational unit established pursuant to subsection 3, through a network of regional sites as appropriate, where designated by the commissioner, shall:

- A. Engage in child find activities as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq.;
- B. Engage in child count activities as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq.;
- C. Engage in appropriate data collection, training, staff development and direct service provision to eligible children with disabilities, from birth to under 3 years of age or until the start of the school year when a child is 4 years of age if the extended Part C option is selected by the child's family, in accordance with Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq.;
- D. Ensure that eligible children with disabilities, from birth to under 3 years of age, receive early intervention services, in accordance with the payment provisions established by the State;

E. Ensure that eligible children with disabilities, from 3 years of age to under 6 years of age, receive free, appropriate public education services and, when a local school administrative unit has assumed responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education, provide services to support school administrative units in carrying out that responsibility in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the department and the school administrative unit;

F. Coordinate with eligible families the development of individualized family service plans for children with disabilities from birth to 2 years of age or until the start of the school year when the child is 4 years of age if the extended Part C option is selected or, when designated by the commissioner, coordinate an individualized education program for a child 3 years of age to under 6 years of age;

G. Ensure that children from birth until 6 years of age who are referred to the Child Development Services System also receive appropriate referrals for support outside of the system, including appropriate public and private programmatic resources, regardless of a child's eligibility for early intervention or free, appropriate public education; and

H. Engage in appropriate training and staff development for identification of and to provide intervention services for children with autism.

**Sec. W-14. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§4, ¶E,** as enacted by PL 2013, c. 338, §1, is amended by amending subparagraph (6) to read:

(6) A description of current and emerging trends and challenges that are having an effect on or are expected to have an effect on costs, services or service delivery methods of the Child Development Services System; and

**Sec. W-15. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§4, ¶F,** as enacted by PL 2013, c. 338, §1, is amended by amending subparagraph (2) to read:

(2) Monthly actual and budgeted expenditures by funding source and by expenditure category for the prior month; and

**Sec. W-16. 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§4, ¶G** is enacted to read:

G. To aid in the transition of responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment from the Child Development Services System to school administrative units pursuant to section 7209-A and to coordinate services to be provided through memoranda of understanding between the department and school administrative units in carrying out responsibilities under Part B, Section 619.

**Sec. W-17. 20-A MRSA §7209-A** is enacted to read:

**§7209-A. Transition of responsibility for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619**

In order to meet the requirement that, beginning July 1, 2028, all school administrative units are designated as responsible for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, the following transition schedule and supports apply.

**1. Transition year one.** Beginning July 1, 2024, school administrative units may be approved by the commissioner to assume the responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619. The department shall approve readiness plans in accordance with subsection 8 and shall provide professional learning in working with young children and their families and technical support throughout the planning and implementation of the first year to assist school administrative units to prepare to meet the standards of the readiness plans. Funding must be provided to school administrative units on a quarterly basis in accordance with section 7303. Prior to a school administrative unit assuming responsibilities for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education, the department shall establish a memorandum of understanding with the school administrative unit to determine the services to be provided by the department and the regional support and service hub. The memorandum of understanding must be reviewed and updated in response to unanticipated needs each month. The department shall contract with a national expert to regularly monitor funding and programming and recommend changes to be considered as part of the transition year one activities.

**2. Additional transition years.** During the 2025-2026, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years, the commissioner shall approve school administrative units in addition to those approved under subsection 1 to assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education. The department shall provide professional learning, funding and technical assistance in the same manner as provided to school administrative units in subsection 1.

**3. Additional time for certain school administrative units.** If the commissioner determines that a school administrative unit is not able to assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education by July 1, 2028 because the school administrative unit requires additional time and support in regions where related services and staffing are not available to support the transition, the commissioner shall provide that school administrative unit with necessary resources and an additional year to assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education. If the school administrative unit cannot assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education, as determined by the commissioner, the school administrative unit may qualify for a modified plan for managing children eligible under Part B, Section 619 in accordance with section 7006, subsection 4.

**4. Service provision.** A school administrative unit that has assumed responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education may directly provide special education and related services to children eligible under Part B, Section 619, may contract with public and private providers to provide special education and related services and may access the school administrative unit's regional site or regional support and service hub to provide certain services as delineated in the memorandum of understanding between the school administrative unit and the department.

**5. Transition of Child Development Services System regional sites to regional support and service hubs.** When a school administrative unit is responsible for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education, the Child Development Services System site in that region shall transition to serve as a regional support and service hub to meet the requirements of section 7212 and to make necessary services and supports available in accordance with a memorandum of understanding developed between the

department and the school administrative unit before the transition of responsibility occurs. The regional support and service hubs must be aligned with the 9 superintendent regions established by the statewide association of superintendents.

**6. Annual report.** Beginning March 1, 2025 and in each subsequent year of the transition phase in subsections 1 to 3, the department shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The report must include data and information regarding the number of school administrative units that have assumed responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education and progress on the implementation of the transition under this section. During the transition, this report must include the annual report requirements under section 7006, subsection 5. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill related to the report to the session of the Legislature in which the report is received.

**7. Due process and compensatory services; review.** The Child Development Services System is responsible for ensuring due process and shall pay 100% of costs for compensatory services for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 who have been underserved through the Child Development Services System. The Child Development Services System shall conduct a review of the files of children eligible under Part B, Section 619 to determine whether legally required special education and related services have been provided. The review must be conducted for children eligible under Part B, Section 619:

- A. Who are entering kindergarten; and
- B. For whom responsibility for a free, appropriate public education is being transferred to a school administrative unit. For children eligible under this subsection, the review must be conducted prior to the school administrative unit assuming responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education.

If legally required special education and related services have not been provided or have only partially been provided, the Child Development Services System shall schedule an individualized education program meeting to determine the compensatory services that are warranted and to develop a plan to provide necessary compensatory services.

**8. Readiness plans; assessment.** Before a school administrative unit may be approved by the commissioner to assume the responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619, the department shall assess the school administrative unit's readiness plan. The school administrative unit's readiness plan must include, but is not limited to:

- A. The requirements for basic approval standards for public preschool programs established by applicable department rule;
- B. Whether the school administrative unit has an existing public preschool program and, if so, whether the school administrative unit has plans to expand that program;
- C. Prior, ongoing and future professional development on early learning and development and best practices for district administrators, leadership, staff and educators;
- D. Assurance of providing special education and related services in the least restrictive environment; and

E. A preschool enrollment policy, if any.

**9. Parental advisory committees.** The Child Development Services System may establish parental advisory committees at each of the 9 regional support and service hubs.

A. The majority of each of the parental advisory committee's membership must be parents. The rest of the membership of the parental advisory committees must reflect representatives from the regional support and service hubs, school administrative units and statewide associations dedicated to assisting parents and families of persons with disabilities. Members of the parental advisory committees are not entitled to compensation.

B. The parental advisory committees shall seek input and feedback, to the greatest extent possible and from a broad array of parents from diverse geographic regions of the State, on the implementation of child find activities and the provision of special education and related services to children eligible under Part B, Section 619. The Child Development Services System shall assist the parental advisory committees in establishing a method for parents to communicate directly with the parental advisory committees to provide feedback.

Beginning March 1, 2025 and annually thereafter, the Child Development Services System shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters, which must include, but is not limited to, the number of parental advisory committees that have been formed, how often they met during the prior year and the number of individuals who have participated. The report may also include findings and recommendations from the parental advisory committees regarding the implementation of child find activities and the provision of free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill related to the report to the session of the Legislature in which the report was received.

**10. Coordination.** The department shall designate an individual to coordinate the concurrent transition of responsibility for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 and for children participating in universal public-preschool consistent with the goals outlined in section 4501. This individual shall facilitate coordination and outreach to increase public-preschool partnerships and shall assist in the coordination of the regional support and service hubs that support the transition of the responsibility for ensuring a free, appropriate public education to school administrative units. This individual shall support school administrative units in contracting with public or private providers and with Child Development Services System regional sites to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate public education for any preschool-aged child.

**Sec. W-18. 20-A MRSA §7211** is enacted to read:

**§7211. Regional support and service hubs**

The Child Development Services System shall establish 9 regional support and service hubs that are aligned with each of the 9 superintendent regions established by the statewide association of superintendents. The regional support and service hubs shall provide supports and resources to school administrative units that have assumed the responsibility for child find activities and for providing a free, appropriate public education to children

eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 and other high-quality early childhood programs partnering with or otherwise contracted by a school administrative unit to fulfill the school administrative unit's responsibilities under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 as determined through memoranda of understanding between the department and the school administrative unit.

**1. Minimum requirements.** Each regional support and service hub shall, at a minimum, offer the following supports, assistance and resources to the school administrative units within the superintendent region to which the regional support and service hub is aligned:

- A. Assistance with child find activities;
- B. Training and other professional development opportunities and technical assistance with the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices for young children, including, but not limited to, curriculum, screening and assessment selections aligned with the State's early learning developmental standards, understanding of and requirements to meet free, appropriate public education and least restrictive environment standards and best practices for inclusive learning;
- C. Assistance with establishing and strengthening community partnerships with existing inclusive, high-quality early childhood programs to help school administrative units meet federal obligations under Part B, Section 619. High-quality early childhood programs include, but are not limited to, Head Start programs, private prekindergarten and child care programs and other community-based programs;
- D. Assistance with locating transportation services;
- E. Assistance with administrative tasks associated with the assumption of responsibility for a free, appropriate public education under Part B, Section 619; and
- F. Maintenance and coordination of access to credentialed educators and service providers who are available to school administrative units on a contractual basis, including, but not limited to, supportive educational technicians; speech, occupational and physical therapists; assistive technology experts; and board-certified behavioral experts.

**2. Guiding principles.** In providing supports and resources to school administrative units that have assumed the responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education to children eligible under Part B, Section 619 in the least restrictive environment, the regional support and service hubs shall:

- A. Ensure that parents of children eligible under Part B, Section 619 are recognized as collaborative partners, experts and decision makers;
- B. Provide written information to parents of children eligible under Part B, Section 619 that includes, but is not limited to, information regarding regional and local services and service providers; other early childhood resources, such as child care providers; Head Start programs; community-based approaches to improving access to quality early care and education; resources available through the department and the Department of Health and Human Services; and other community partners and resources. Such information must also be made available on any publicly accessible website associated with the Child Development Services System or the regional support and service hubs;

- C. Emphasize federal and state requirements regarding inclusion and least restrictive environments;
- D. Encourage coordination with community partnerships to maximize resources and provide comprehensive services to meet the needs of children;
- E. Support and encourage the use of evidence-based supports, including, but not limited to, behavior analysts and assistive technology;
- F. Support and encourage the use of a strength-based approach in the support and provision of services to children eligible under Part B, Section 619;
- G. Facilitate parental support groups and provide resources for parents dealing with bullying, difficult family dynamics and behavioral challenges; and
- H. Convene and assist the parental advisory committees under section 7209-A, subsection 9.

**Sec. W-19. 20-A MRSA §7303** is enacted to read:

**§7303. Per-pupil rate for children eligible under Part B, Section 619**

Funding for school administrative units that assume responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 may not be appropriated to or allocated through general purpose aid for local schools and must be provided at 100% state share. This funding must be calculated by the commissioner as follows.

**1. Per-pupil operating allocation.** The per-pupil operating allocation for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 must be calculated on a per-pupil basis in the same manner by which operating allocations are generated in sections 15674, 15675 and 15681.

**2. Preschool special education and related services allocation.** The preschool special education and related services per-pupil allocation must be calculated annually for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 at the EPS per-pupil rate for each school administrative unit under section 15676, multiplied by 1.5, for each eligible resident student. This allocation must be paid at the start of each quarter, based on the estimated student count on July 1st and adjusted to reflect actual counts on October 1st, with additional adjustments in subsequent quarters.

**3. High-cost placements.** A separate allocation must be determined for high-cost special education placements for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 in accordance with this subsection.

**A. For high-cost, in-district placements,** additional funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost more than 2 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 2 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate.

**B. For private school placements,** additional funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost 4 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 4 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate.

C. For public school, out-of-district placements, additional funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost 3 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 3 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate.

D. For public regional special education program placements, additional funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost 2 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 2 times the statewide special education preschool per-pupil rate.

**Sec. W-20. 20-A MRSA §7304** is enacted to read:

**§7304. Preschool Special Education Program Fund**

**1. Fund established.** The Preschool Special Education Program Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a nonlapsing fund within the department to provide funding for general education and special education and related services for children eligible under Part B, Section 619. The department shall distribute funds through a quarterly allocation.

**2. Eligibility requirements.** Beginning in fiscal year 2024-25, school administrative units that have assumed responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 are eligible to receive allocations from the fund.

**3. Purposes.** Allocations from the fund may be made to school administrative units that have assumed the responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring a free, appropriate public education for special education and related services pursuant to section 7006, subsection 2 as outlined in each child's individualized education program and for general education costs for children eligible under Part B, Section 619.

**Sec. W-21. 20-A MRSA §7305** is enacted to read:

**§7305. MaineCare billing system**

The department shall establish a centralized MaineCare billing system to bill for eligible services for children eligible under Part B, Section 619. School administrative units may opt out of participation in the centralized MaineCare billing system.

**Sec. W-22. Expanded Part C eligibility criteria.** The Department of Education shall convene a work group to review and recommend expansion of the State's eligibility criteria under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq. and submit a report including findings, recommendations and suggested legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters no later than March 1, 2025. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill related to the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

**Sec. W-23. Department of Health and Human Services to adopt rules regarding school-related services.** No later than December 31, 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services shall, within existing resources, amend its rules in Chapter

101: MaineCare Benefits Manual to establish a new section containing the requirements for the provision of school-related services.

**Sec. W-24. Department of Education to disseminate information on Maine Public Employees Retirement System retirement.** The Department of Education shall collaborate with the Maine Public Employees Retirement System to develop and disseminate guidance for school administrative units, child development services and child development services employees regarding the capacity of school administrative units to participate in the Participating Local District Consolidated Retirement Plan and the potential impacts on social security benefits of teacher plan participation or participating local district plan participation for potential school administrative unit employees. School administrative units and the Child Development Services System regional sites and support and service hubs shall, to the maximum extent possible, include this information on their publicly accessible websites.

**Sec. W-25. Department of Education to review Child Development Services System reporting requirements.** The Department of Education shall review the legislative reporting requirements related to the Child Development Services System and submit a report, no later than March 1, 2025, including findings, recommendations and suggested legislation, to the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over education matters on reporting requirements that must continue for child development services and revised reporting requirements for the department as school administrative units assume responsibility for child find activities and free, appropriate public education for children eligible under Part B, Section 619 of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, Section 1400 et seq. pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 7006, subsection 2. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill related to the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

**Sec. W-26. Early childhood special education pathways pilot project.** The Department of Education shall establish the early childhood special education pathways pilot project as a one-time accelerated graduate program developed around early childhood education to support teachers in obtaining in a master's degree and to provide reimbursement for coursework and support in obtaining an endorsement on a professional teacher certificate for teachers of children from birth to 5 years of age with disabilities. The program must be designed to accommodate 50 participants.

## **PART X**

**Sec. X-1. Rename Facilities, Safety and Transportation program.** Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Facilities, Safety and Transportation program within the Department of Education is renamed the School Facilities program.

## **PART Y**

**Sec. Y-1. 20-A MRSA c. 312-A,** as amended, is repealed.

## **PART Z**

**Sec. Z-1. 20-A MRSA §7207-B, sub-§5** is enacted to read: