

**Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs & Appropriation and Financial  
Affairs Committee  
Biennial Budget  
Questions and Responses  
Monday, March 1, 2021**

**Question:** There is a reduction of \$15,600 on page A-171 of the budget document for the Maine HIV prevention education program. Is this a reduction or elimination?

**Response:** This program's budget is \$150,000 per year. This initiative represents a reduction to the program which will reduce the number of trainings offered. \$134,400 remains for that purpose.

**Question:** Where is the budget for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM)?

**Response:** The budget for MSSM (\$3,615,347) is included in GPA and may be found on page 6 (in the language portion of the bill) in Part C. There are no reductions for MSSM.

**Question:** There is no new funding for Child Development Services (CDS), but the Representative is aware of wait lists.

**Response:** There has been a historic lack of private providers. The Office of Special Services and CDS are instituting a comprehensive review of each of the 9 regions, the service provided and the current wait lists in order to develop a system that meets all the needs of the children it serves. Work is currently occurring that identifies key staff needed, including fiscal support, and the processes needed to make this happen. The cost is unknown at this time, however, CDS has one-time funding that will be used for this purpose. It is expected that these funds will suffice, however, if they do not the Department will submit a budget request in the 130<sup>th</sup> second regular session of the Legislature.

**Question:** Part II reflects removing the appointment of the Director of Early Childhood Special Education in CDS. No statutory change was made to 20-A §7209(4).

**Response:** Part II changes the director of early childhood special education in Child Development Services from appointed to non-appointed. Over the last few years changes have occurred within the Department and CDS.

In FY17, the supervision of the Director of Early Childhood Special Education transferred from the Commissioner of DOE to the Director of Special Services. At that time a Public Service Manager II position was established by financial order and continued in a future budget bill (Public Law, 2017, chapter 284). The state position was created to have a closer working relationship between the department and CDS to provide clear oversight through direct reports to the Commissioner's Office. This position works with CDS daily under direction of the State Director of Special Services and assists with various special services projects.

The change necessary to 20-A MRSA §7209, sub-§4 was inadvertently overlooked resulting in Part II.

**Question:** What is the timing of the refinements to the CDS system?

**Response:** See response above related to CDS.

**Question:** In relation to community schools, is the Department of Education applying for the Full-Service Community School Program grant? Is the Maine Department of Education considered using Titles I, II, and IV of ESEA for community schools and enrichment?

**Response:** State Education Agencies are not eligible to apply for the [FY2021 Full Service Community Schools \(FSCS\) Competition](#). Eligible applicants must include partnerships between local educational agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations. Consortia consisting of the LEA and non-profit

partners usually apply for the Full-Service Community Schools program. The consortia are usually led by the LEA or a non-profit.

In FY17 \$150,000 was appropriated in the GPA account for a community schools pilot program in Public Law 2015, chapter 267. Due to lack of applications, the funding for community school programs was modified to \$50,000 in FY18-20. In Public Law 2019, chapter 616, \$150,000 was appropriated for community school programs. The current FY21 budget is \$200,000. There is currently only one school district, RSU 34 that supports a community school program. RSU 34 applied for and received \$50,000 annually in FY18, FY19, FY20 and FY21.

Title I, II and IV funds are allocated to School Administrative Units (SAU) by specific formulas outlined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by Every Student Succeed Act and cannot be earmarked by the Maine DOE for a specific purpose or use. Schools operating Title I Schoolwide programs are provided the flexibility and authority to use all available resources (as described in a school's schoolwide plan and comprehensive needs assessment) to best support the needs of students in the school if statutory requirements and regulations are met for federal funds.

**Question:** EPS is using the October 1 count and doing a one-year change to the teacher ratio?

**Response:** As required by statute, the school funding formula uses the average of the two most recent October 1 student counts October 2019 and October 2020. Recognizing that in most school units the October 1, 2019 count would have been higher than that of 2020 so, by using the average, the impact of student enrollment decline from COVID impacts is somewhat mitigated.

As most of the student enrollment decline occurred in the elementary grades, the student teacher ratio on page 1 of the ED 279 was made to reflect the smaller class sizes as a result of COVID related enrollment declines and the inability of school units to react to those declines by altering staffing levels.

**Question:** Learning through Technology (LTT) – Why are the positions moving to GPA? What are the implications for MLTI?

**Response:** Historically the positions related to LTT were in the GPA account. In Public Law 2019, chapter 616 a budget initiative moved 2 positions to the LTT account. This initiative moves the positions back to GPA so that the 4 positions related to LTT are in the same account. The GPA account was chosen over the LTT account because the funding for LTT is appropriated in GPA.

There is not impact to MLTI.

**Question:** What are the federal grant programs that the Department receives funding from?

**Response:** See separate attachment.

**Question:** An organizational chart would be helpful to understand the scope of personnel within the Department.

**Response:** See separate attachment.

**Question:** Teacher retirement, how is retirement evolving?

**Response:** This amount is provided to DOE by MainePERS. The Department has requested additional information from MainePERS.

**Question:** Is the Child Nutrition amount on page A-179 of the budget document a new grant?

**Response:** The \$6.5m initiative for the Child Nutrition grant represents an increase in expenditures. The department receives an allocation (through the Legislature in the budget) in order to spend the federal funds. That allocation is the mechanism needed to reimburse school administrative units for costs associated with the program. The current allocation for this grant is approximately \$59m. The department projects, based on historical data, that another \$6.5m in allocation is needed to cover costs in FY22 and FY23.

**Question:** What is the net change in personnel in the Department?

**Response:** There are 6 new positions. Which includes: Education Specialist III, a Management Analyst II, an Office Specialist Supervisor, a Public Service Coordinator II, a Public Service Manager II and a Public Service Manager III. One position, a Public Service Coordinator II, is being eliminated for a net increase of 5 positions.

**Question:** On page 4 of the testimony regarding Alternative Breakfast, has the pandemic impacted the amount of funds being accessed?

**Response:** The SAUs have been accessing Coronavirus Relief Funds, as well as ESSER Funds to support Child Nutrition for all students.

**Question:** How have the 11 budget categories in GPA changed over the past few years.

**Response:** This is available on the department's website at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/historical> - Sixth bullet "State Total Expenditure by Budget Category FY 2006-FY2019". The School Finance Team is working on adding FY20.

**Question:** Part C on page 5 of language, could a ten-year spreadsheet be provided?

**Response:** This is available on the department's website at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/historical> - Second bullet "General Purpose Aid (GPA) – FY 08 through preliminary FY 22 - Enacted and Proposed Adjustments to State Subsidy, Targeted Education Funds, and Enhancing Student Performance & Opportunity (Excel)"

**Question:** Maine Safety Center (MSSC) – The federal grant funds are ending in 2023, why is there state funding being requested in the Biennial Budget?

**Response:** The Maine School Safety Center (MSSC) is a new office within the Department of Education. The MSSC provides the following services:

- Emergency Operation planning training and tech support
- Site assessment and tech support
- Training (school safety specialist program)
- Police training (SRO and officers involved with youth)
- Behavioral Threat assessment program (training and tech support)
- Policy and legislation review and recommendations

The department received a 5-year Maine Grant for School Emergency Management (GSEM) grant to support schools in their effort to develop high quality emergency operations plans (EOP) and has served in the development of the MSSC. The grant, however, is finite and the MSSC is designed to continue in perpetuity to assure that Maine schools receive the support they require to maintain overall and continuing safety for their staff and students. There is high demand for the services provided by the center, and it will continue to grow with or without COVID. The 5-year funding for the center is \$3,167,711. The funding sources are as follows:

GSEM grant = \$2,643,700

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund = \$395,466

General Fund = \$128,545.

The cost for positions over the 5-year period is \$2,189,789 and the cost for All Other (including contracts) and indirect are 1,585,887 for a total 5-year cost of \$3,775,676. The difference between the cost and the funding needed is \$607,965 which represents the initiatives in the budget related to the MSSC.

**Question:** Description of the COVID Funds and the State set asides for each of the CRF and ESSER I and II funds.

**Response:** This is included in the list of grants (from above).

**Question:** National Board Certification – What are we paying teachers in the current year and for the Biennial years. This is funded by credentialing fees. How much is being collected?

Why does Part C reflect \$307,551 and the National Board Certification Salary Supplement Fund reflect \$335,000?

**Response:** The budget for the National Board Certification Salary Supplement Fund is \$642,551. This amount is comprised of 2 amounts in 2 different accounts. The GPA budget amount (which can be found in Part C) is \$307,551 and the funds collected from certification fees is are in the Other Special Revenue Funds account in the amount of \$335,000.

The department budgets revenue for certification fees in the amount of \$1,144,888 per year. Of that amount, \$335,000 is for the salary supplement, \$75,000 for the scholarship fund and \$734,888 that goes to undedicated General Fund. Because the \$734,888 is used statewide to balance the budget, any funds taken from that would have an adverse fiscal impact and create a hole.

Supplement payments made in FY21:

Level	Total FTE	Total Amount Needed
1 - \$3000	175.30	\$525,900.00
2 - \$5000	73.10	\$365,500.00
		\$891,400.00
Paid out in FY 21		\$642,551.00
Difference Short		\$248,849.00

**Question:** Part JJ reflects a proration.

**Response:** Part JJ – The fiscal note from LD 1549 stated that the supplement would either need more funding or would continue current practice of prorating the payments and §13007, sub-§2D states that no more than \$335,000 would be paid in each fiscal year. §13013-A states the amounts of the supplements but does not mention the proration. As a result, the language was added.