



Date: January 15, 2022

Title: Maine Department of Education Report on: Resolve Directing the Department of Education to Develop Training for School Counselors and Review Limitation on Autism Spectrum Disorder Course Work for Special Education Certification

Source of Report: [LD 639 \(Resolve 2021, Chapter 89\)](#)

Background

The LD 639 Resolve was the result of combining the concepts from two pieces of separate legislation, LD 639, An Act To Improve Professional Training for School Counselor and LD 350, An Act To Increase the Number of Courses Regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder That Count toward Special Education Certification. As both bills pertained to educator professional development, the resulting Resolve included direction for the Department of Education (DOE) to develop the pertinent trainings. The Resolve was voted OTP-AM from the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, June 3, 2021 and became law June 23, 2021.

Section 1:

That the Department of Education shall, in consultation with a statewide coalition to end domestic violence, develop and provide professional development at no cost to school counselors and other school employees, as appropriate, on family or intimate partner violence. The professional development must address screening, the impact of the violence on children and referral and intervention strategies. No later than January 15, 2022, the Department of Education shall report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on the professional development, the number of professional development opportunities offered and the number and type of participants participating in the professional development opportunities.

The DOE, in collaboration with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, developed a series of unique trainings that are specifically designed to build awareness and resources for school counselors and school-based mental health professionals. The trainings are organized within three modules. Each module consists of a three-hour training and are scaffolded to build a greater understanding of the impact of domestic violence on students and their families and steps that can be taken to support them.

The initial round of module 1 trainings occurred in late 2021. There were 100 registrants and more than 60 participants in attendance. Participants reported a significant increase in subject knowledge, and over 95% indicated that the training was “excellent”.

Section 2:

That the Department of Education, when conducting any review or revision of teacher certification rules, shall review the requirements for special education certification related to course limitations on autism spectrum disorders with a focus on increasing the flexibility of courses that may count towards special education teacher certification and report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than January 15, 2022 on that review, including any recommendations for special education certification as it relates to course work on autism spectrum disorders.

During the summer of 2021, a consensus-based rulemaking committee finalized their proposal for a revised version of Rule Chapter 115. Throughout the seven-month collaborative process, a special education sub-committee met to review and discuss special education teacher certification requirements. The State Board of Education spent one year considering revisions to the special education teacher endorsement. The new proposed rule revises the 282 endorsement for teachers of children with disabilities. This revision supports flexibility in the coursework that is eligible to meet semester hour requirements. Two public comment periods occurred during the rulemaking process. [LD 1933, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115: The Credentialing of Education Personnel, a Major Substantive Rule of the State Board of Education](#) has been provisionally adopted by the State Board of Education and will be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on February 8, 2022.

Contact:

Bear Shea LCSW
Mental Health Specialist
Climate, Culture and Resilience Team Coordinator
Office of School and Student Support
w.bear.shea@maine.gov

Erin Frazier
Director, Special Services, Birth to 22
Office of Special Services
Erin.Frazier@maine.gov