



125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2011

Legislative Document

No. 715

H.P. 546

House of Representatives, February 23, 2011

**Resolve, To Ensure That Maine Teachers and Paraprofessionals
Who Work with Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Are
Highly Qualified**

(EMERGENCY)

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 18, 2011. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

Handwritten signature of Heather J.R. Priest in cursive.

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Clerk

Presented by Representative STRANG BURGESS of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Senator ALFOND of Cumberland and
Representatives: KENT of Woolwich, MAKER of Calais, PRESCOTT of Topsham,
RICHARDSON of Carmel, SANBORN of Gorham, STUCKEY of Portland, VOLK of
Scarborough, Senator: LANGLEY of Hancock.

1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** it is vital to ensure children with autism spectrum disorders in our schools
4 achieve the best educational outcomes possible; and

5 **Whereas,** it is necessary to ensure as soon as practicable that teachers of children
6 with autism spectrum disorders are highly qualified; and

7 **Whereas,** this legislation provides a means to ensure teachers of children with
8 autism spectrum disorders are highly qualified; and

9 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
10 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
11 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
12 therefore, be it

13 **Sec. 1. Department of Education to study teachers and paraprofessionals**
14 **who work with children with autism spectrum disorders. Resolved:** That the
15 Department of Education shall conduct a study to ensure that teachers and
16 paraprofessionals who work with children with autism spectrum disorders are highly
17 qualified. The department shall convene a work group with broad stakeholder
18 representation. The purpose of the work group is to analyze the qualifications of teachers
19 and paraprofessionals who work with children with autism spectrum disorders and to
20 make recommendations that will assist the department in ensuring that the teachers and
21 paraprofessionals are highly qualified. The work group shall:

22 1. Examine and recommend the minimum level of competencies that regular
23 educators, special educators and paraprofessionals need to provide educational services to
24 students with autism spectrum disorders;

25 2. Examine and recommend a specific curriculum that regular and special education
26 teachers must complete for certification in order to be considered a highly qualified
27 teacher for students with autism spectrum disorders;

28 3. Examine and recommend specific guidelines for paraprofessional supervision,
29 including, but not limited to, daily progress monitoring, problem solving and philosophy;

30 4. Develop a plan that will phase in a new paraprofessional structure, including basic
31 education technician I, II and III certifications, and create a concentrated and specialized
32 certification for working with students with autism spectrum disorders; and

33 5. Define a designation for a paraprofessional to be considered highly qualified to
34 provide special education services; and be it further

35 **Sec. 2. Report. Resolved:** That the work group under section 1 shall submit its
36 recommendations to the Department of Education by November 1, 2011. The department
37 shall submit a report, including the findings and recommendations from the work group,
38 to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 7, 2011,

1 and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs is authorized to
2 introduce legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 125th Legislature.

3 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this
4 legislation takes effect when approved.

5 **SUMMARY**

6 This resolve requires the Department of Education to convene a work group to
7 conduct a study to ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals who work with children
8 with autism spectrum disorders are highly qualified. The work group is required to
9 submit its recommendations to the department by November 1, 2011. The department is
10 required to submit a report, including the findings and recommendations from the work
11 group, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December
12 7, 2011, and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs is
13 authorized to introduce legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 125th
14 Legislature.