

MAINE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

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# Cohort 3 & Cohort 4 Presentation 2025

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**Presented by:**

The Maine DOE's Commissioner's Office &  
Office of Special Services & Inclusive Education



# Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

- Section 619 IDEA
- Special education provided to preschool-age children
- ECSE services are designed to help children with disabilities participate in activities that are typically appropriate for their developmental stage. Children who qualify for ECSE may receive services in a variety of settings, including Pre-kindergarten classrooms, the home, and Community settings like Head Start and preschool.
- Early Intervention Birth to 3 years of age – a system of support for children with developmental delays





# Legislation

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**LD 345: An Act to Transition the Responsibility for Child Find Activities and for Ensuring a Free, Appropriate Public Education for Eligible Children from the Child Development Services to School Administrative Units**

**LD 2214: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025**

**LD 2214 became Public Law 2023, Chapter 643, Part W**





# Elements of the law:

## Transition of child find and FAPE responsibilities to SAUs

- Responsibility for child find and free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old pre-K students with IEPs will transition to school administrative units (SAU) by July 1, 2028.
- SAUs may provide services directly or may contract with public or private providers to support services; the SAUs may also access their CDS Regional Site or other regional supports to provide services.
- Maine DOE will review each SAU's readiness plan before the Commissioner of Education approves the SAU to assume the child find and FAPE responsibilities.

# Elements of the Law

## CDS

- Over the next 4 years, transition of CDS regional sites to regional support and service hubs aligned with the superintendent regions.
- The CDS System will have minimum service offerings and guiding principles for the regional support and service hubs
- Each CDS regional hub may appoint a parental advisory committee to seek input and feedback on the implementation of child find activities and provision of FAPE.
- The CDS System is responsible for due process and for paying 100% of the costs for compensatory services for children who have been underserved through the Child Development Services System.





## Elements of the Law, cont.

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### Funding

- "The funding may not be appropriated or allocated through general purpose aid for local schools and must be provided at 100% state share."
- The Maine DOE will implement a funding formula to fully fund SAUs for the assumption of responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring FAPE for eligible children.
- Funding also includes high-cost in- and out-of-district costs, similar to what is in place for K-12 students.
- Additional grant funding is available to SAUs assuming these responsibilities fall, 2024 (ESSER ARP funding)
- \$4 million – Revolving Renovation Fund



# Allocations

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- Per pupil allocation for PK children with IEP
  - SAU's unique EPS rate + special ed additional weight
  - Additional allocation for children in Child Find process
- Not a reimbursement model
- July 1 - First allocation count date
- Oct 1 – Second allocation count date
  - "True count" - Funding can go up or down
  - This is the only qtr. that funding *could* go down.
- Fully funded
  - Allocation can be reviewed and adjusted



## Early Childhood Special Education Funding

Fund 2213  
Revenue 3128

### Preparing for PreK

Receive estimated funding table from DOE

Review child counts

Establish a budget (May submit for DOE review)

Once in Cohort - Schedule a meeting for an onsite NEEDS assessment.

- Classroom design and setup
- Curriculum
- Transportation (application)
- Capital Improvements (application)

Funded outside of allocations. Should still be applied to Fund 2213 and Revenue 3128.

## District Responsibility

- Provide a detailed Trial Balance for Fund 2213
- Complete quarterly upload to MEFS/MEDMS

## How, Where, and When

Via Email to: (Grants4ME coming soon!)

[Sarah.McLaughlin@maine.gov](mailto:Sarah.McLaughlin@maine.gov) and

[Barbara.A.McGowen@maine.gov](mailto:Barbara.A.McGowen@maine.gov)

Timeline: within 30 days from the end of a quarter (Oct 30, Jan 30, April 30, and July 30)



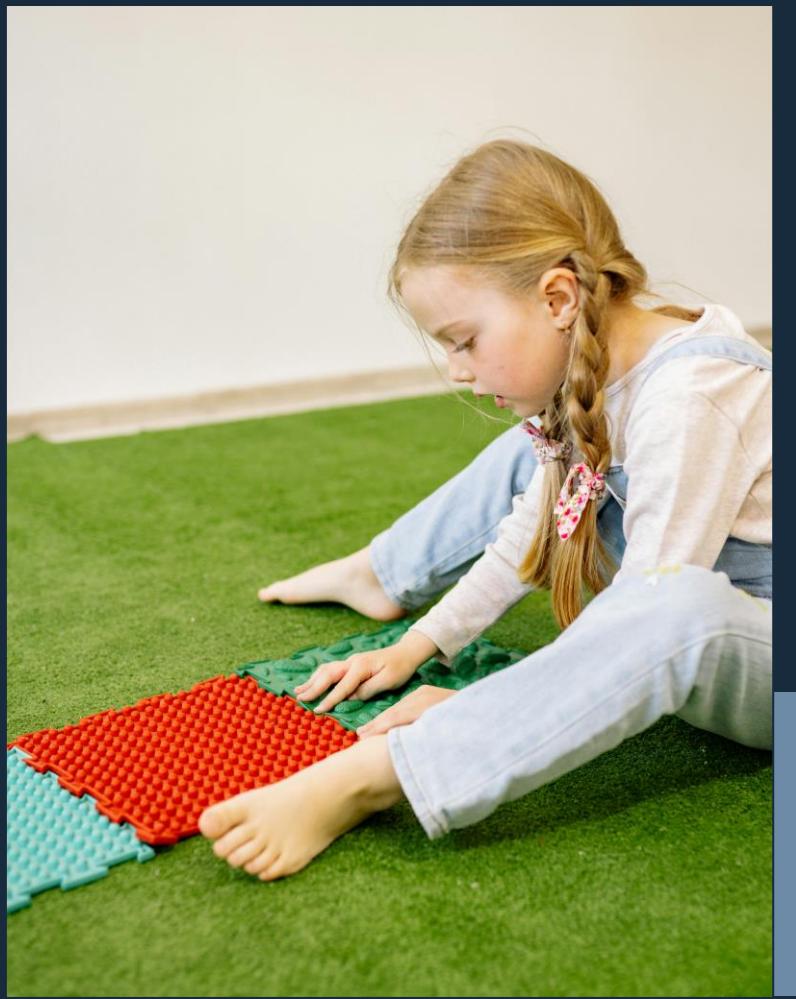
## DOE Responsibility

Review TB and upload to ensure:

- Reasonable and necessary
- Review high in and out of district costs
- Funding adequacy

What happens if there is a funding shortfall?

- One-time allocation increase
- Increase in allocation
- Funding outside of allocation



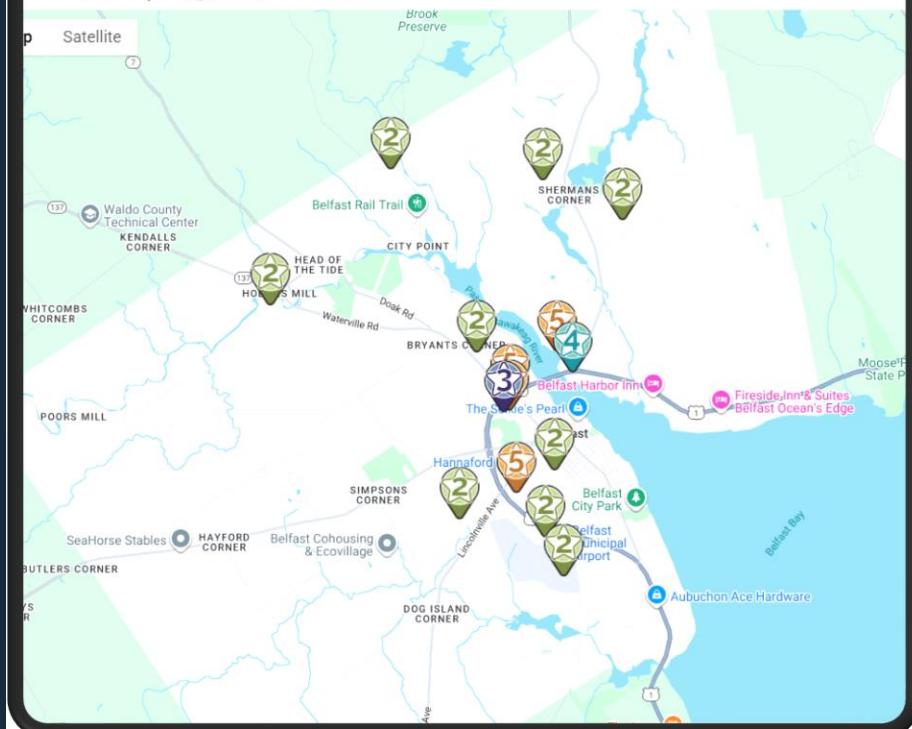
# Initial Work for SAUs

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- Information gathering
  - Attend general information sessions
  - Individual meetings with DOE/CDS team
    - Learn about the students in your catchment area
    - Understand students' service needs
  - Learn about private providers
  - Learn about the funding
- Assemble local team
  - Superintendent
  - Special Education Director
  - Transition Lead
  - Business Manager

# Initial Work Action Items

child care programs found.

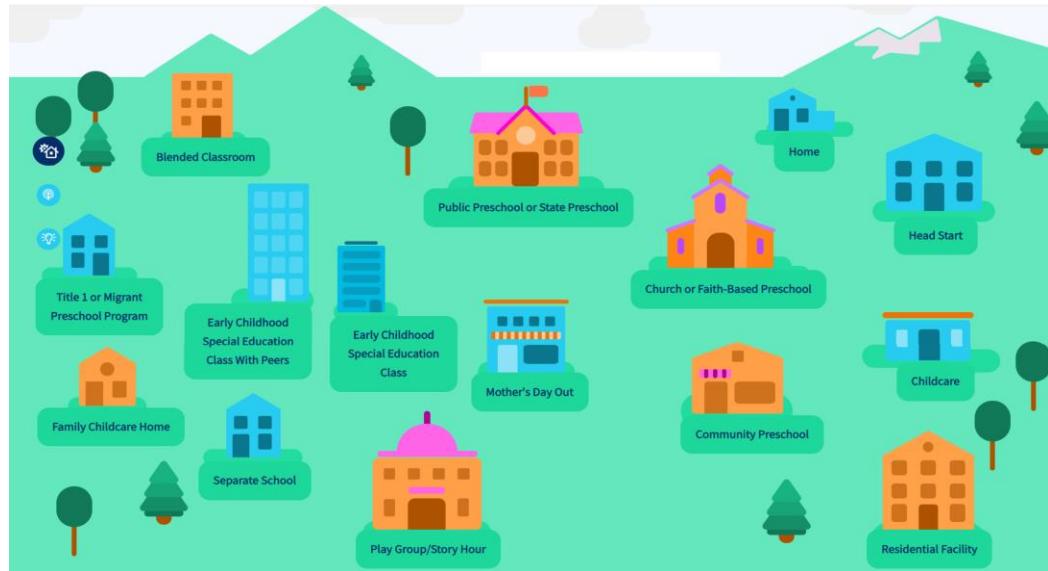


- [Pre-K Program Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- Space capacity/needs
- Staffing capacity/needs
- Projected child numbers
- Budget development
- Identify potential community partners
- Look up Childcare Choices in ME: [Child Care Choices for Maine](#)
- Preschool consultation
- Review [Early Childhood Special Education website](#)
- Check in With Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators

# Community Partnerships and FAPE in a Mixed Delivery System

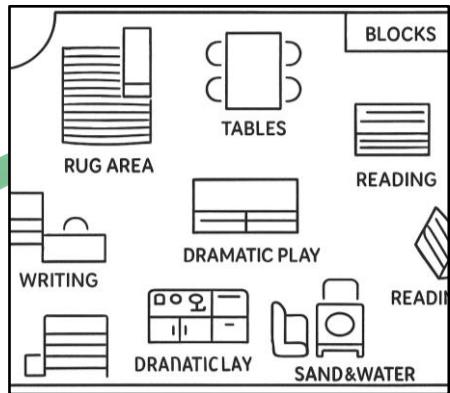
## Effective Partnerships:

- ↑↓ Common goals and understandings
- ↑↓ Mutual benefit
- ↑↓ Dialogue and collaboration
- ↑↓ Clear language



[Link to prior presentation](#)

# Expanding Internal Capacity



# Expanding Your Reach Externally

**Discovery**—who is in my neighborhood?

**Outreach**—forming beneficial relationships

**Coordination**—formalizing partnerships

**Collaborating**—to meet the needs of children and families

**PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR PROVIDERS OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**PUT YOUR AGREEMENT ON PAPER**  
Whether this is an MOU, a contract, or some other form of partnership agreement, development occurs through a process of ongoing meetings and dialogue between the partners. The conversations help each partner gain an understanding of the requirements they would need to meet, the internal procedures each partner will follow to meet those requirements, and the resulting plan to serve the community's children and families together.

**IDENTIFY THE PURPOSE**  
Describe the reason for the partnership and the goals the partners intend to meet as a result.

**DESCRIBE PROGRAM PARTNERS**  
Describe the general contributions each group will bring to the partnership. May include:

- Services, type of programming, characteristics and needs of children to be enrolled
- Environment capacity and ratios

**MAINTAIN THE PARTNERSHIP**

- Respect the agreed upon roles and responsibilities
- Revisit and amend as needed
- Keep communication open and regular
- Meet your partner where they are and provide support when needed
- Value your partner's ideas and input

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## Serving ECSE students – District Boundary

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SAUs **are** responsible for ECSE for children who reside within their SAU boundary who

- Attend the SAU Pre-K programs
- Attend a collaborative program in the SAU community

SAUs **are not** responsible for ECSE when children

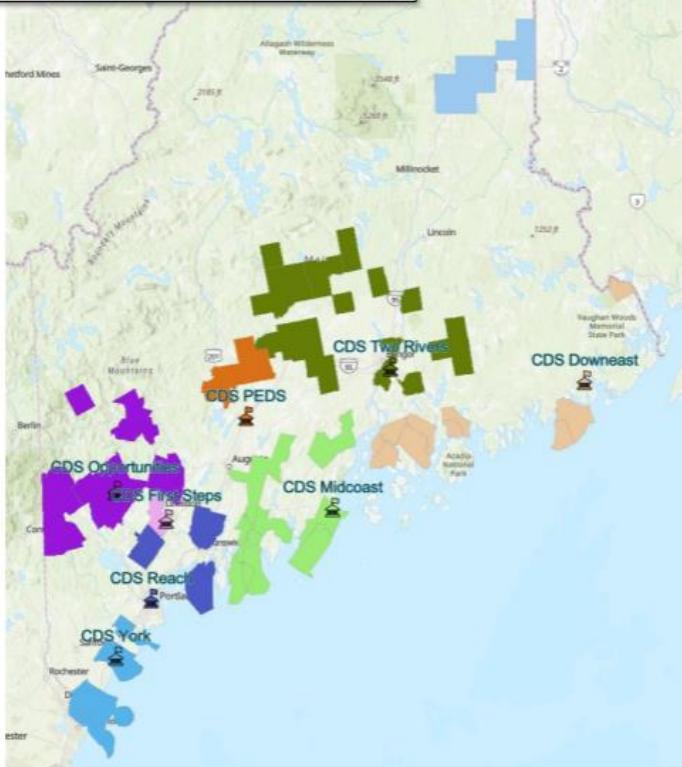
- Attend a program out of state
- Attend a program out of the SAU boundary *and* there is programming available in the SAU.



## Serving ECSE Students – District Boundary, cont.

For SAUs that do not have programming/ space within their Pre-K programs nor any collaborative programs in the SAU community, the resident SAU would do one of the following options:

- Contract with CDS Support and Service Hub
- Superintendent's agreement with the SAU where the student is in a program
- Develop partnerships with the childcare/ preschool program where the child attends
- Provide telehealth in the childcare/preschool program where the child attends
- Offer that the child participate in drop-in services already provided in the SAU
- If the IEP agrees, the child can access services at the service provider location
- Or another solution that is specific to your area



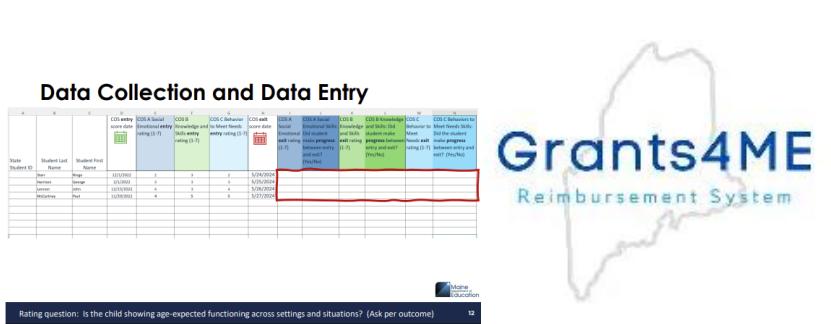
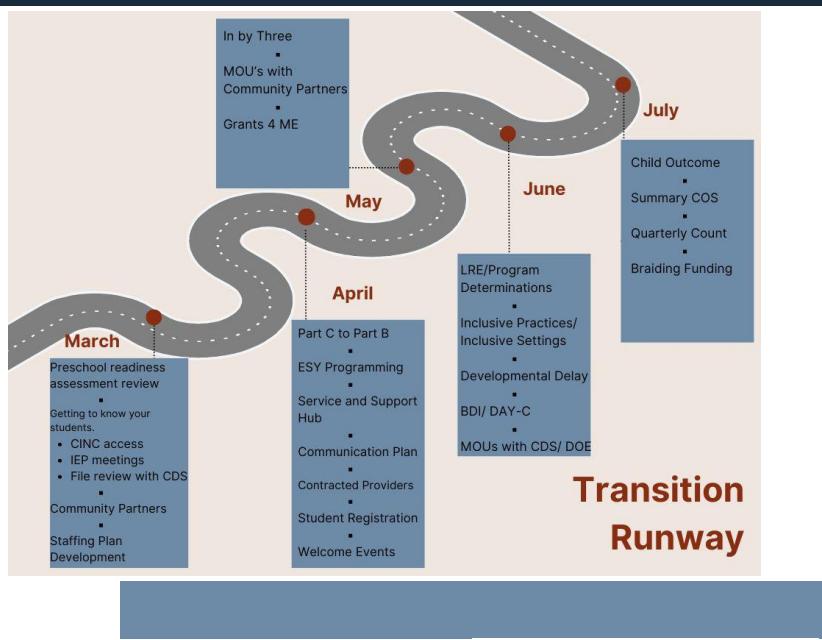
# **CDS Sites to CDS Support & Service Hubs**

- During Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, CDS Sites continued to operate as they have for children in the towns and municipalities of non-Cohort schools
- CDS also worked with Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 SAUs, depending on each MOU
- CDS is currently analyzing how the child count will be impacted by Cohort 3 and 4 schools
  - Assess capacity
  - Realign staff across the state to ensure an equitable workload

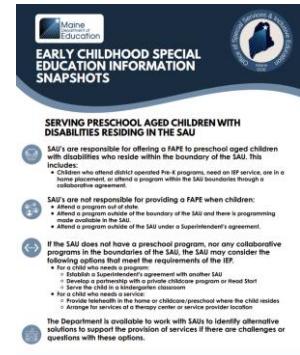
# CDS Service and Support Hubs

- CDS sites continue to provide services to children in their regions.
- MOUs are developed with each Cohort SAU.
  - Detail Service and Supports
  - Monthly Meeting
  - Individualized for Each SAU
- Service and Support Hub
  - Preschool Programming
  - Related Services
  - Itinerant 282B Services
  - Case Management
  - Professional Development



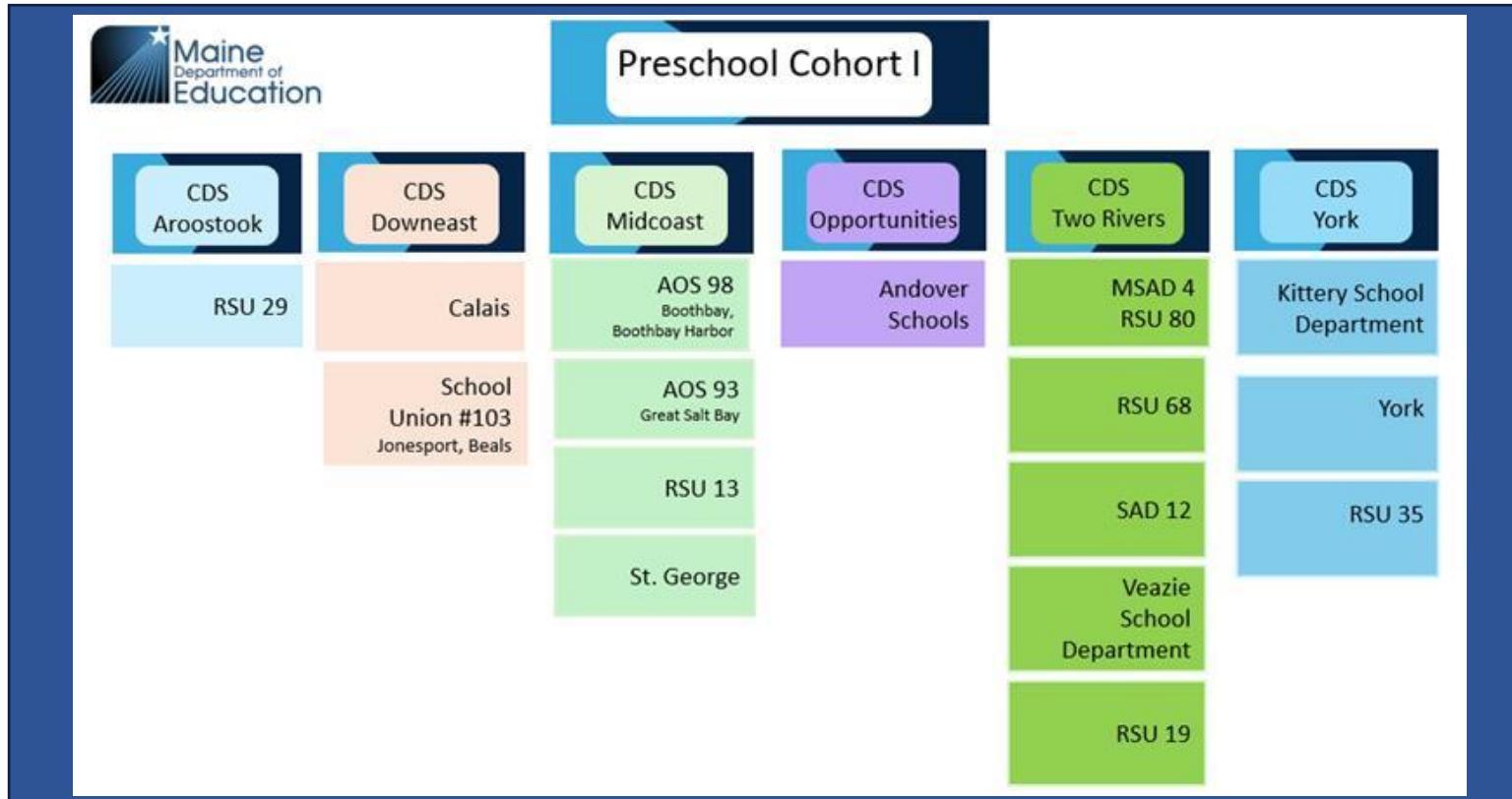


## Maine DOE Early Childhood Special Education Website

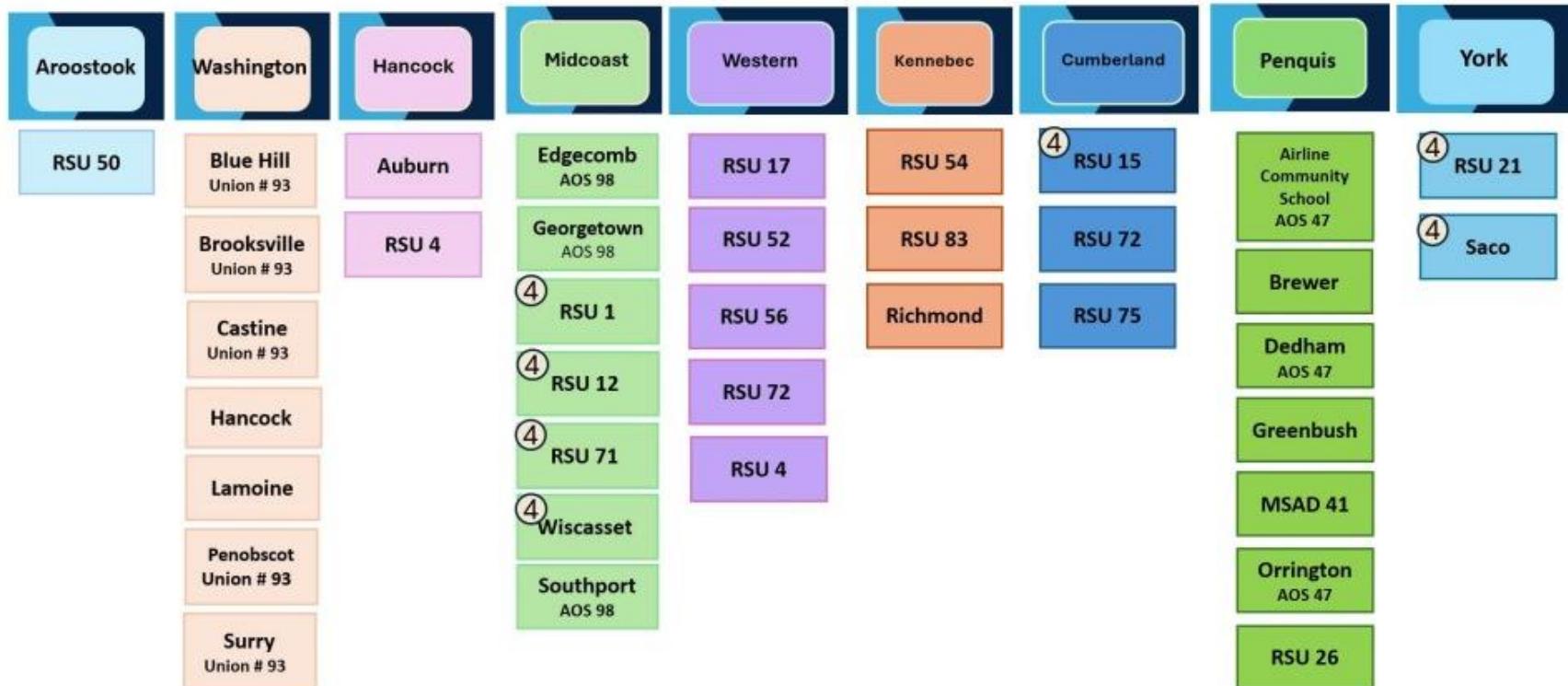


**Maine DOE Supports**  Maine  
Department of  
Education

# Cohort 1



## Cohort 2 2025-2026



# Cohort 3 & 4

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## Cohort 3:

Currently 70+ SAUs

↑ Interest in 4-year-olds only year 1

## Cohort 4:

Will have to assume responsibility  
for 3–5-year-olds





# What's Next?

Outreach and supporting readiness for SAUs in  
Cohorts 3 and 4



# Questions?



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