

Recommendations to Inform the Expansion of Public Pre-K in Maine



December 2025



Introduction

Maine has been awarded several Preschool Development Grants to support its early childhood system. Through its Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Planning Grant (PDG B-5), Maine developed an ambitious and significant plan to ensure young children experience quality environments and families have equitable access to public Pre-K through a mixed-delivery system. In 2022, the state applied for and received a PDG B-5 Renewal Grant to implement this roadmap by building infrastructure and capacity for a more coordinated, efficient, and high-quality mixed-delivery system. As part of its PDG B-5 Renewal Grant, Maine decided to explore different funding and delivery models for public Pre-K expansion through pilots implemented in Years 2 and 3 of the PDG B-5 grant. This work will support Maine in its goal to reach universal public Pre-K access, meaning that any 4-year-old can attend public Pre-K if their family would like to enroll them.

A key activity in Maine's PDG B-5 plan was the establishment of an Advisory Team charged with guiding the development of these pilots and a set of recommendations for statewide expansion of public Pre-K through a mixed-delivery model. Through implementation of these recommendations, Maine seeks to increase public Pre-K options for families, enhance program quality, and build toward universal access while strengthening and expanding partnerships across the mixed-delivery system.

Development and Work of the Advisory Team

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT) established an Advisory Team that held a shared commitment to public Pre-K expansion and bring insights and expertise from the breadth of early childhood education perspectives in the state. Representation included state program administrators, school administrative unit (SAUs) representatives, child care providers (family child care, center-based), community partners, advocates, higher education faculty, and families of young children in Maine. During the summer of 2023, the ELT selected a set of individuals to invite to the Advisory Team (see **Appendix A** for a list of members). The Advisory Team work was facilitated and supported by the [Policy Equity Group](#), an early childhood consulting firm with deep expertise in facilitation and early childhood systems building. The Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE) participated in some meetings, as the cost modeling work CELFE was conducting for Maine was relevant to many topics the Advisory Team discussed.

The Advisory Team's mission was to:

- Set a vision and guiding principles for public Pre-K opportunities for Maine's children and families;
- Identify opportunities and barriers to expanding public Pre-K through Maine's mixed-delivery system;
- Review and analyze research on expanding public Pre-K;
- Advise on strategies for expanding public Pre-K through Maine's mixed-delivery system, informed by a collective process that ensures the perspective of all stakeholders are represented;
- Inform the design of pilots to expand public Pre-K through mixed-delivery models; and
- Study and use findings from the pilot to inform recommendations.

The Advisory Team participated in an onboarding session in early September 2023 and convened for a full-day in-person kick-off meeting later that month. To ground the initial phase of work, the Advisory Team reviewed a landscape analysis conducted by Policy Equity Group that examined the current delivery of public Pre-K in Maine, as well as approaches used by a selected set of other states that had expanded their Pre-K programs (New Jersey, Vermont, West Virginia) across a set of key factors (e.g., governance, funding/financing, credentialing). The analysis provided shared context and areas for consideration for the Advisory Team as it explored features to includes in the pilots and as they began developing recommendations for expanding public Pre-K.

The Advisory Team met regularly throughout the process, holding monthly virtual calls from October 2023 through December 2024 and bi-monthly meetings from January through November 2025. During these meetings, members learned from existing partnerships about effective practices and lessons learned, examined models from other states (including virtual presentations from early childhood administrators from other states), and engaged in facilitated discussion. The team’s input directly informed both the Phase 1 (SY 2024–25) and Phase 2 (SY 2025–26) pilots, and used information from updates on the pilots to refine recommendation areas.

To support deeper exploration, subcommittees were formed around four key topic areas: governance, finance and funding, credentials, and partnerships. In September 2024, the Advisory Team convened in person to review draft recommendations developed by each subcommittee. Significant overlap across these drafts led to the consolidation of a preliminary set of recommendations, which the full team refined throughout 2025. In September 2025, the Advisory Team met in person once more to finalize the recommendations and identify the conditions and supports needed for implementation.

Final Recommendations

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team will use the final recommendations to support expansion of public Pre-K in Maine. This document is designed to support both **understanding** and **implementation** of the recommendations. The full set of recommendations is presented first to provide a high-level view of the proposed changes. The remainder of the document then examines each recommendation individually, offering deeper context and practical guidance. For each recommendation, the document includes:

- **Rationale:** An explanation of why the recommendation was made, including key considerations, areas of discussion, and, when relevant, how differing perspectives were weighed and resolved to arrive at the final recommendation.
- **Implementation Guidance:** Practical direction on how to bring the recommendations to life, including:
 - **Action plans** outlining what needs to occur and the responsible entity and/or organizations;
 - **Enabling conditions** required to support successful implementation; and
 - **Financial implications** to consider as part of planning.

The document concludes with guidance on **implementation sequencing**, recognizing that some recommendations must be addressed before others can begin. This sequencing is intended to help policymakers and system leaders prioritize actions and plan for a phased, feasible rollout.

Recommendations



1. Workforce

1.1 Update Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 124 to include alternate staffing credentials for staff serving as lead teachers and assistant teachers in public Pre-K programs operated in approved licensed child care settings where the educator is hired by a community partner. Specifically:

- Achievement of Level 5 on the Maine Roads to Quality career lattice will satisfy the requirement to serve as a lead teacher in a public Pre-K program operated in a licensed child care setting. The Level 5 teacher will be expected to attain the Maine Roads to Quality Preschool Credential or Early Childhood Associate Degree within three years.
- Achievement of Level 2 on the Maine Roads to Quality career lattice will satisfy the requirement to serve as an assistant teacher in a public Pre-K program operated in a licensed child care setting approved to offer programming. The assistant teachers at Level 2 will be expected to move to a Level 3 within three years.

1.2 Clarify accepted credentials for school administrative unit employed Pre-K teachers to include the 029 endorsement in Chapter 124.

1.3 Provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to lead teachers without an 081/029 in public Pre-K programs operated in approved licensed child care settings where the educator is hired by the community partner.



2. Funding

2.1 Create a Pre-K funding formula to:

- Reflect Chapter 124 ratio requirements for Pre-K classrooms;
- Reflect the difference in costs to administer services part-day and full-day; and
- Determine what, if any, Isolated Small School adjustments need to be made.

2.2 Explore strategies to provide flexibility for public Pre-K through a provider outside the school catchment area.

2.3 Provide start-up funding to schools and community-based providers who wish to start or expand Pre-K, like the current \$35,000 - \$50,000 ARP Pre-K Expansion grants.



3. Partnerships

3.1 Identify and implement state-level positions to foster enabling conditions for partnerships through coordination, supports, and technical assistance.

3.2 Create a toolkit to provide guidance on relationship-building for SAUs and private providers.

3.3 Establish a mixed delivery response team to support partnerships.



4. Governance

4.1 Identify and implement statutory changes needed to include three-year-olds with Individualized Education Plans in public Pre-K.

4.2 Implement updates to Chapter 124:

- Require partnership programs to be a Star 3 or higher on Rising Stars for ME.
- Require a minimum of 5 days a week, with a minimum of 15 hours of programming a week.
- Determine areas where the waiver process needs to be formalized.
- Revise Section 12 to provide more in-depth information to SAUs and private providers on the partnership process.
- Revise Section 13 to provide more in-depth language on the transition process and, as needed, add in any updates on IDEA Part C to Part B transitions.

Note: Each recommendation is clickable and links directly to a section with more detailed information.

Recommendation 1.1

1.1 Update Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 124 to include alternate staffing credentials for staff serving as lead teachers and assistant teachers in public Pre-K programs operated in approved licensed child care settings where the educator is hired by a community partner. Specifically:

- **Achievement of Level 5 on the Maine Roads to Quality career lattice will satisfy the requirement to serve as a lead teacher in a public Pre-K program operated in a licensed child care setting. The Level 5 teacher will be expected to attain the Maine Roads to Quality Preschool Credential or Early Childhood Associate Degree within three years.**
- **Achievement of Level 2 on the Maine Roads to Quality career lattice will satisfy the requirement to serve as an assistant teacher in a public Pre-K program operated in a licensed child care setting approved to offer programming. The assistant teachers at Level 2 will be expected to move to a Level 3 within three years.**



Rationale

Credentialing is a major barrier to private providers' participation as partners in Maine's public Pre-K program. Currently, educators are expected to have the 029 or 081 credentials.¹ These requirements exclude many experienced educators who demonstrate strong competencies but lack formal credentials. Rather than requiring costly, time-intensive degrees—especially amid ongoing post-COVID workforce shortages—the Advisory Team explored alternative pathways that recognize demonstrated skills. The [Maine Roads to Quality \(MRTQ\) Career Lattice](#) was identified as a viable indicator of competency already recognized by the state that could serve as an entry point for participation as an educator in a publicly-funded Pre-K program. After reviewing the lattice, the Team identified appropriate entry levels for **lead teachers** and **assistant teachers**.

Lead Teachers. The Advisory Team identified Level 5 as an appropriate entry point for educators in partnership sites. There are multiple pathways for practitioners to meet Level 5 requirements that honor education and experience. This entry point expands provider participation while maintaining quality. The Advisory Team held robust discussions as to whether the entry point should lead to acquiring the credentials currently listed in Chapter 124. There was discussion that doing so without addressing pay disparities could push qualified teachers from private partner sites to higher-paying public schools. After considering what best assures a high-quality educator, the Team agreed that the MRTQ Preschool Credential or an Early Childhood Associate Degree (EC AA) appropriately reflect the competencies needed for teaching Pre-K. They also determined that a three-year timeline to meet this requirement—consistent with current practice for moving from provisional to full credentials—is reasonable. Three of the five “starting points” in Level 5 already meet the requirement for having an AA (if AA is in ECE). Thus, only a portion of the Level 5 educators would need to pursue additional training or education to meet the qualifications for the MRTQ Preschool Credential or Early Childhood Associate Degree.

Assistant Teachers. The Advisory Team decided the entry point for assistant teachers should be a Level 2 on the MRTQ Career Lattice, with an expectation of moving to a Level 3 within three years. The Level 2 requirements are: High school diploma/GED, one year of experience, and 45 hours of Maine Roads Core Knowledge Training or three college credits in ECE. There was initial discussion about requiring educators to reach Level 4 within a set timeframe, but this was deemed unrealistic given the additional experience and training required (at minimum, an addition four years of experience, 90 additional hours of Maine Roads Core Knowledge Training or six additional college credits). The Advisory Team agreed that progressing to Level 3 is the most practical expectation.

Implementation



Action Steps

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team will need to implement a routine technical rule change for Chapter 124 and revise the language in Section 7.01.A (Quality of Education Personnel - Specific Requirements - Teacher Degree Requirement) and 7.01.B (Quality of Education Personnel - Specific Requirements - Assistant Teacher Requirements) to reflect the recommendation language. This change can be made only once the Preschool Credential has been officially released by MRTQ, which is expected in early 2026.



Enabling Conditions

To support this change, there are several areas of consideration:

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities.** Identify which state entity will track, monitor, and support educator progress toward required credentials. At the partnership level, encourage professional development plans to be included within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- **Assess higher education readiness.** Determine whether institutions can meet increased demand from lead teachers pursuing the 081 or 029 endorsement. Review articulation agreements to ease credential attainment.
- **Support and streamline support pathways:**
 - Depending on their chosen route, educators may work with MRTQ Quality Specialists and/or cohorts (MRTQ Credential pathway), or with community colleges and financial support organizations (e.g., [TEACH scholarships](#)).
 - Clarify who is responsible for guiding educators moving from Level 5 to the MRTQ Preschool Credential or an EC AA (e.g., community partners through MOU assurances, regional or state-level supports). Assess which supports currently exist, how they can be leveraged, where gaps remain, and what resources are needed to fill them.
 - Leverage existing supports, such as the Office of Child and Family Services Workforce Navigator, who can map out individualized pathways to attaining early childhood degrees/credentials at the individual educator level. This resource also hosts suggestions for programs and funding opportunities through the Opportunities for ECE Website.
- **Ensure system alignment.** The Advisory Team emphasized the importance of avoiding diluted standards or conflicting expectations across systems (QRIS/Rising Stars, Career Lattice, Chapter 115). They recommended mapping educator requirements across all relevant policies and programs to ensure coherence and alignment.
- **Track pay parity/salary stipends.** Monitoring pay alongside credential expectations will help to understand the fuller context of credentials and wages.
- **Develop a communication plan.** Ensure school administrative units and private providers clearly understand the new expectations, timelines, and supports.
- **Consider a case-by-case exception or waiver process.** Provide pathways to address unique educator circumstances while still upholding overall credential expectations.



Funding

While the change to Chapter 124 language will not require funding, there will be indirect funding implications for supporting educators in meeting these requirements. For educators, potential pathways for funding supports include TEACH scholarships and low-cost options offered through MRTQ.

Recommendation 1.2

1.2 Clarify accepted credentials for school administrative unit employed Pre-K teachers to include the 029 endorsement in Chapter 124.



Rationale

Currently, [Chapter 124](#) states that lead teachers must hold an 081 (B-5) endorsement. This language was written before the addition of Pre-K to the 029 endorsement (Early Elementary Teacher), which allows a teacher to instruct children in Pre-K (through 3rd grade). Educators in public school settings can teach Pre-K with this new endorsement. The recommendation directs the inclusion of this endorsement into Chapter 124 Section 7.01.A to reflect currently accepted practice.²

Implementation



Action Steps

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team will need to implement a routine technical rule change for Chapter 124 to update the language in Section 7 (Quality of Education Personnel) 7.01 Specific Requirements will need to be updated for A (teacher degree requirement).



Enabling Conditions

This is a language change in Chapter 124 and should not necessitate any support for the field to guide implementation. However, communicating that this change has been made will be important for awareness in the field.



Funding

No funding is expected to be needed to implement and sustain this change.

Recommendation 1.3

1.3 Provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to lead teachers without an 081/029 in public Pre-K programs operated in approved licensed child care settings where the educator is hired by the community partner.



Rationale

The Advisory Team affirmed that mentoring and coaching benefit all educators' professional growth. In addition to the professional experiences Advisory Team members shared, Pilot 1 data showed that coaching supported positive outcomes for both program quality and children. However, given fiscal constraints and the high cost of mentoring and coaching, the Advisory Team recommended initially prioritizing mentoring and coaching for partnership-site educators who do not yet hold the Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Preschool Credential or an associate degree, with the goal of expanding supports to all early learning educators over time.

Implementation



Action Steps

The Maine Department of Education can create a cross-agency workgroup to develop a plan for coaching and mentoring support. The plan should address the following questions, with the goal of establishing a clear menu of coaching/mentoring options and needed infrastructure:

- **Evidence Base:** What does current research and evaluation data say about the impact of coaching and mentoring supports on educator outcomes and program quality? What models of coaching/mentoring have been most successful, and for who? How will competency be defined and demonstrated?
- **Leadership:** Who would initiate this work – the Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT), Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS), MRTQ, or a collaboration between all three?
- **Coaching Infrastructure:**
 - Where will coaches/mentors come from, and how will coaching/mentoring be organized?
 - Who provides coaching/mentoring, at what levels of intensity, and how will access decisions be made?
 - Is there an opportunity to leverage or align with existing coaching or mentoring initiatives or models used in Maine? For example:
 - Head Start's evidence-based coaching that is already in place, which includes a professional development plan;
 - Supports developed by the OCFS Workforce Navigator (e.g., ladders to certification; Bridge Project module series to support local providers);
 - Learnings from the coaching experiences that were part of the [First4ME initiative](#); and
 - Potential to leverage the MRTQ foundation of mentoring course to support the coaches' professional development.
 - How would school administrative units (SAUs) be involved?
 - For example, explore whether this work fall under the SAUs [mentoring policy](#) as a method of support.
 - How could Community of Practice opportunities between SAUs and child care practitioners support coaching/mentoring efforts?
- **Scope and Need:** How much coaching and mentoring would be needed, and for how many educators? This will include obtaining data on the number of Level 5 educators in the state who do not hold an associate degree.
- **Implementation Approach:** How might a hub model or regional structure best support delivery?
- **Resources and Sustainability:** What funding and supports are required to establish and sustain the system?

Workgroup membership should include state cross-agency staff (ELT, OCFS), SAUs, MRTQ, institutes of higher education, and, critically, practitioners (providers, Pre-K educators). Organizations with practitioner membership, such as Maine AEYC, should be considered as well.



Enabling Conditions

The workgroup should seek opportunities to align with and leverage existing mentoring and coaching activities to avoid duplication or competing models. Coaches should receive robust training and other supports to maximize effectiveness and sustainability.



Funding

The State will need to identify and secure consistent, dedicated funding streams to cover both the costs of mentoring and coaching delivery and the professional development of coaches themselves. This includes determining which existing funds can be accessed or braided to support this work. This will be an important area for the workgroup to explore in depth.

Recommendation 2.1

2.1 Create a Pre-K funding formula to:

- **a. Reflect Chapter 124 ratio requirements for Pre-K classrooms;**
- **b. Reflect the difference in costs to administer services part-day and full-day; and**
- **c. Determine what, if any, Isolated Small School adjustments need to be made.**



Rationale

2.1.a. Maine does not have an Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding formula specific to the state's Pre-K program. Instead, when the State began the Pre-K program, it applied the kindergarten EPS formula to Pre-K. This decision has had significant implications for the adequacy of Pre-K funding as the per child amount for kindergarten is based on adult-to-child ratios that are vastly different from the requirements of Chapter 124, the Basic Approval Standards for Public Preschool. For example, the kindergarten funding formula is based on a ratio of 1 lead teacher to 15 student and 1 education technician to 114 students. The Chapter 124 standards require a ratio of 1 adult to 8 students. Accordingly, Maine must create an EPS funding formula specific to Pre -K.

2.1.b. The current EPS funding formula does not distinguish between part-day and full-day Pre-K programs, providing the same per-pupil rate for both. As a result, programs operating part-day schedules (e.g., separate morning and afternoon sessions, or Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday alternate group sessions) can receive double funding for the same teaching position, since one teacher covers two groups of children. This structure creates a financial incentive to operate part-day programs rather than full-day ones. Approximately 40 percent of Maine's public Pre-K programs are half-day or operate less than 15 hours a week. To incentivize full-day programming, which better meets most families' care needs and provides more time to support child development, the EPS funding formula should provide 1.0 funding for full-day programming (25 hours per week or more) and 0.5 for part-day programming.

2.1.c. Given how rural Maine is, it has a number of small, isolated schools³ that the overall funding formula disadvantages because of their small size. To remedy this issue, the state provides an "Isolated Small School (ISS) Adjustment" to the funding formula. After the new funding formula for Pre-K is created, the state must determine whether an Isolated Small School Adjustment is necessary and the size of that adjustment.

Implementation



Action Steps

A statute change is necessary for each one of the recommendations. To prepare for the change, the Department of Education School Finance Team will need to develop models to determine costs (state and local) that take into account:

1. Alignment with ratios in Chapter 124 (Teacher and Education Tech, with a ratio of 1:8/2:16)
2. A full-time and part-time program model.
3. Any lack of economy of scale for ISS adjustment.

As part of the model, impacts on minimum contributor school administrative units will need to be considered, as well as whether there are any differences between center-based and family child care.



Enabling Conditions

Legislative Strategy

Identifying prior legislative champions (e.g., Pre-K Commission members) and cultivating new champions within key legislative committees will be important to gain support for the necessary statute change. Advocates and agency leaders can also strengthen legislative momentum by clearly articulating the broad public benefits of increased Pre-K investment, such as improved school readiness, increased workforce participation, meeting community needs, and the long-term sustainability and expansion of Pre-K programs when funding reflects operational costs. This narrative should be paired with transparent cost modeling and evidence from implementation pilots. Legislative meetings should include tailored district-level data, anticipated fiscal impacts, and examples of how the proposal strengthens both school administrative unit (SAU)-based and mixed-delivery Pre-K options—key considerations for legislators weighing impacts in their communities.

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT) and School Finance team will need to anticipate and prepare concise, evidence-based responses to topical questions they are likely to receive, including:

- **Cost and outcomes.** What will the proposed changes cost at the state and local levels, and what outcomes will the investment achieve?
 - Cost modeling, which can be run by the Department of Education School Finance Team, will specify projected state and local expenditures. The rationale should emphasize how adequate funding strengthens child safety, program quality, access, workforce stability, and long-term sustainability of partnerships.
- **Staffing ratios.** Why is the staffing ratio for Pre-K different from that of Kindergarten, and how does this difference support child development and program quality?
 - Younger children require closer supervision, support with routines, and scaffolding of social-emotional development. Ratios are grounded in safety standards, developmental science, and national benchmarks. The state must also ensure that programs are able to recruit sufficient qualified staff to meet these expectations.
- **Full-day versus part-day Pre-K.** What evidence supports full-day Pre-K, and why should the state invest more to move in this direction?
 - Research shows that full-day models are associated with improved outcomes for children and better meet family needs by aligning with work schedules.
- **Mixed delivery.** How will these changes incentivize more mixed-delivery partnerships, and why are they necessary?
 - SAUs do not have the capacity to serve all eligible 4-year-olds, particularly as districts must also meet Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) requirements for 3- to 5-year-olds. Mixed-delivery sites expand access, support options that meet the needs of working families (e.g., family child care or centers not located in schools), and leverage existing community infrastructure. Stable and adequate funding makes partnerships viable.
- **Local Impacts.** What does this mean for my district? Is this a benefit or a detriment?
 - Provide district-specific estimates on access, funding, workforce, and partnership opportunities. Emphasize flexibility for SAUs to choose a delivery approach that meets local needs.
- **Cross-Agency Responsibilities.** Clarify shared responsibilities across agencies and how coordination will ensure alignment with child care licensing, subsidy participation, and special education requirements. In particular, consider cross-sharing of information between the legislative committees. For instance, this work would move through the Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Committee, but consideration should be given to how the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee will be informed and/or engaged.

Additional Areas of Consideration

Advisory Team members encouraged the state to consider additional questions and operational realities that should be considered – either to factor into the formula or to be aware of as potential barriers to be addressed. These include:

- **Transportation.** Consider including efforts to place aides on buses. Supervision is critically important during transportation, especially in light of increasing behavioral needs, distracted driving concerns, and appropriate safety protocols for younger children (e.g., buckling systems).
- **Facilities Funding.** Many rural communities lack appropriate Pre-K facilities for both 3- and 4-year-olds, while FAPE transitions increase demand for specialized classroom environments that meet licensing and quality standards. Yet, there is no current funding for facility upgrades (classrooms, materials, playgrounds).
- **Workforce Capacity.** Even with funding that reflects Pre-K ratios, there is a risk of unfilled positions if compensation is not competitive (connected to [Recommendation 1](#)). Consider the inclusion of Pre-K coordinator positions (general and special education) within the *funding formula*.
- **Requirements for Keeping Pre-K Formula Funds in Pre-K.** Consider whether policy should require a portion of funds to remain dedicated to Pre-K classrooms and staffing.
- **Governance and Policy Alignment.** Clarify where decision-making authority sits across ECA and HHS. Consider how requirements intersect with licensing, MRTQ, special education, and partnership agreements.

Engagement With SAUs

Further engagement with SAU administrators will be critical for understanding incentives and barriers to forming or expanding public-private Pre-K partnerships. Cost-model data will also help SAUs understand true Pre-K costs and make informed decisions about whether funding is fully reaching classrooms. Since there is no explicit requirement that Pre-K funding be spent on Pre-K services, clear guidance and communication will be essential to ensure funds flow appropriately.



Funding

There will be funding implications, but the exact amounts will need to be modeled.

Recommendation 2.2

2.2 Explore strategies to provide flexibility for public Pre-K through a provider outside the school catchment area.



Rationale

Families' circumstances and home locations often change, and maintaining stability in their child's early learning experience is essential for continuity of relationships and developmental progress. In some cases, the best fit for the family may be located outside of their assigned school catchment area (e.g., a child care teacher who would like to bring their child to the program they work in). Currently, however, there is significant inconsistency across the state in how out-of-catchment Pre-K enrollment is handled. Decisions often depend on whether individual superintendents are willing to enter into local agreements, resulting in inequitable access and uncertainty for families and providers. The state's school funding formula also does not reflect the realities of community-based programs that enroll Pre-K-eligible children from multiple districts. These providers face administrative and financial challenges, frequently needing to negotiate multiple memorandum of understandings (MOUs) or contracts to serve children across district lines.

To promote equitable access and operational efficiency, the state should explore strategies for funding and governance flexibility that allow children to remain in their chosen or current Pre-K setting regardless of district boundaries, while ensuring appropriate accountability and resource allocation. Advisory Team members emphasized that any recommendation should be narrowly focused on specific situations where this flexibility is warranted to support access, making clear this is not a school-choice model. Recognizing that public early childhood funding differs from K-12, where every community maintains a publicly funded school option, this recommendation is geared to support access for unique situations when such an arrangement is needed.

Implementation



Action Steps

To identify strategies, the ELT should convene a working group of parents, child care providers, special education directors, and superintendents to brainstorm for an approval process. Using data and best practices, the working group should create clear guidelines and identify best practices for superintendents, private providers (including CBOs) to follow, and include considerations for how flexibility would support general education and special education decisions, and any transportation implications. Additionally, the working group should aim to create supports for families, such as awareness materials and simplified explainers that are understandable for families, that can be included in the partnership toolkit (see [Recommendation 3.2](#)).



Enabling Conditions

The working group can identify data needed to better understand the extent of the problem and how the problem will grow with expansion. Existing practices, such as superintendent agreements, should be reviewed as well. The Advisory Team suggested tapping into existing resources, such as SAUs with these agreements, and the

knowledge and resources provided by Special Services at the Department of Education. Partnerships between public Pre-K and Head Start also offer a useful model for how braiding funds can be written into MOUs.



Funding

Districts will be impacted with the gain or loss of student funding formula dollars and may also incur costs associated with establishing contracts with providers. For the state, there may be a cost for stipends for working group participants.

Recommendation 2.3

2.3 Provide start-up funding to schools and community-based providers who wish to start or expand Pre-K, like the current \$35,000 - \$50,000 ARP Pre-K Expansion grants.



Rationale

Schools and community-based providers that wish to initially serve or expand serving 4-year-old children may need financial assistance for facility renovation, equipment, and other start-up expenses. Such costs are typically high and have proved a barrier to expansion. Maine should provide start-up funding through a grant program modeled off the \$10 million in funding from the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan that was used to establish or expand public Pre-K programs. Additional funding for grants should be considered to allow new and expanding providers to renovate classrooms, offer recruitment bonuses, purchase curriculum materials and other classroom supplies, trainings, or address other expenses associated with the start-up of a new Pre-K classroom.

Implementation



Action Steps

Ultimately, funding would require inclusion in the state budget—through the Department of Education, Governor’s Office, or a legislative sponsor—and would likely necessitate statutory authorization or a new appropriation to support school systems that have not yet reached universal Pre-K access (particularly those serving fewer than 50 percent of eligible students).

The Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT) will need to gather data and run cost models to inform potential legislative action and budgeting needs. For example, determining the time frame required to fully implement efforts and identifying what level of funding would be reasonable, with distinctions between the needs of centers and family child care providers. Modeling will estimate total costs to the state based on per-provider or per-school allocations multiplied by the number of sites.

Additionally, the team will need to make grant design decisions such as who is eligible for grants, allowable uses of funds (high-quality instructional materials, classroom environments, staffing quality, professional development), and whether funds are tied to quality improvement activities.



Enabling Conditions

The state can leverage existing data, such as the [CELFE cost modeling](#), and data from [the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan Child Care Infrastructure Grant Program](#).



Funding

Funding through the state budget will be required, and opportunities to promote sustainability of these funds should be explored (e.g., including them in the funding formula).

Recommendation 3.1

3.1 Identify and implement state-level positions to foster enabling conditions for partnerships through coordination, supports, and technical assistance.



Rationale

In examining barriers to successful partnerships, the Advisory Team discussed that while many strong examples and tools already exist—such as model memorandum of understandings (MOUs), partnership best practices, and guidance on integrating programs like the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and food services—these resources are often scattered, difficult to find, and not supported by a coordinated process. Further, building relationships and navigating partnership development is also time-intensive and can be challenging for both school administrative units (SAUs) and community-based providers.

The Advisory Team emphasized that partnerships are more likely to succeed when communities have dedicated, formalized support to guide them through each step. The Team originally proposed a single position, but when discussing all the types of support needed, realized the work is too complex for a single position to manage effectively. Instead, multiple positions are needed to combine specialized partnership knowledge, time for relationship development, and coordination across regions; the Advisory Team ultimately decided a state-level team would be necessary. This team could play a key role in collecting, organizing, and disseminating existing tools, while also helping communities understand and navigate the partnership process in ways that reflect their local context. Because communities vary widely in their starting points and needs, this support must include individualized technical assistance and hands-on navigation across all phases of partnership development—relationship-building, startup, maintenance, and growth.

Fortunately, the existing Pre-K Partnership Specialist role provides a strong foundation on which to anchor and scale a multi-position, statewide team. This role brings experience navigating both state- and local-level contexts and can guide the design, sequencing, and rollout of complementary positions needed to effectively respond to the complexity of Pre-K partnerships. Leveraging this expertise creates an opportunity to intentionally build a coordinated team structure that is responsive to diverse partnership models and local implementation realities. Some members raised concerns that a solely state-level role might lack the local insight needed to build trust and understand regional dynamics. To address this, the state team should consider how to work with regionally-based supports (e.g., Child Development Services (CDS) regional hubs) to ensure aligned communication, shared learning, and strong community-embedded support.

Implementation



Action Steps

Convene a small interagency planning group (Department of Education (DOE), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and other relevant partners) to work with the Pre-K Partnership Specialist to explore funding opportunities and determine the most effective structure and home for the new positions, with a strong emphasis on potential for cross-agency positions using braided funding. The planning group should assess the pros and cons of locating positions within DOE, DHHS, or as jointly funded and overseen roles. This process should also include examining how this work could align with regional CDS to support collaboration with community sites and ensure coordinated support statewide.

Once the governance and funding pieces are determined, the team will develop a job description and engage in the hiring process. The Advisory Team identified important experience and competencies necessary for the team's success:

- strong cross-sector expertise;
- ability to navigate both the SAU/DOE contexts and the child care regulatory landscape;
- an understanding of MOU development;
- knowledge of funding mechanisms (e.g., 8279 funds);
- grounding in coaching/mentoring models, in particular community-based coaching;
- knowledge of special education;
- cultural responsiveness;
- ability to design tiered levels of partnership support to meet varying site needs; and
- an understanding of the practical realities and nuances of early childhood programs - bringing enough creativity to tailor solutions in a field where no one-size-fits-all approach exists.

Core skills include relationship-building, clear communication, and the ability to serve as a bridge and advocate for local providers while collaborating effectively with superintendents and other district leaders. The range of skills needed underscore why a partnership team is important, as these competencies would rarely be found in one individual.



Enabling Conditions

Collaborate with pre-existing supports to bolster and/or develop local, regional, and state coordination. It will be useful to explore other state models, such as West Virginia's Pre-K coordination structure. Its State Pre-K Coordinator works with a cross-departmental team, but is hired through the Department of Education.



Funding

These positions will require ongoing, stable funding.

Recommendation 3.2

3.2 Create a toolkit to provide guidance on relationship-building for school administrative units and private providers.



Rationale

Partnerships between school administrative units (SAUs) and private providers take time, trust, and ongoing effort. Communities are at varying stages in this work—some are just beginning to think about cultivating relationships, while others have established partnerships that could benefit from additional support to sustain and strengthen them. There is an opportunity to bring together knowledge from the field to address needs across this full continuum. A state-developed toolkit could consolidate relationship-building strategies, sample memorandum of understandings (MOUs), and other resources that have been tried and tested in other communities. By curating and sharing these practical tools and lessons learned, the state can help local partners learn from one another and build partnerships that are more effective, equitable, and sustainable.

Implementation



Action Steps

This recommendation, which originated through discussions with the Advisory Team, is already underway through a workgroup (Department of Education (DOE), DOE Early Learning Team, Child Development Services, Office of Special Services & Inclusive Education, Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS), Head Start). A next step includes bringing families in the process to gain their input and insights. There should also be a user-testing phase to refine the toolkit, with multiple audiences (e.g., center-based providers, family child care providers, SAUs, etc.). Responsibility for this work should be placed into the scope and responsibility of the above position(s) identified in [Recommendation 3.1](#).

The Advisory Team recommended:

- Writing sections in the most appropriate voice for the audience (e.g., families, child care, and SAUs often use different vocabulary and wording);
- Offering web-based options;
- Incorporating existing resources as relevant (e.g., resources from the Bridge program) into ongoing technical assistance;
- Including timelines; and
- Offering professional development on how to use the toolkit.



Enabling Conditions

The Advisory Team has learned from strong examples of practice, with Advisory Team members contributing useful resources and guidance that can be used, along with existing resources from the OCFS Program Navigator.⁴ To ensure the toolkit is put into practice, outreach to SAUs, providers, and families should be carefully designed and implemented.



Funding

There will potentially be funding required for stipends for family input and testing. There may also be funding necessary for getting the toolkit online and/or printing it.

Recommendation 3.3

3.3 Establish a mixed delivery response team to support partnerships.



Rationale

Partnership development often requires navigating policies, programs, and funding streams that cross multiple departments and teams. Communities frequently encounter challenges that do not fall neatly within a single team's, much less department's, purview. Establishing a cross-departmental team would allow the state to bring together collective expertise and ensure coordinated, responsive technical assistance as well as identify strategic technical assistance needs. Such a team could help communities address complex issues that arise at the intersections of systems and provide timely, tailored guidance. By working collaboratively across departments, the team would strengthen make it easier for local partners to access consistent information and navigate the partnership process successfully.

Implementation



Action Steps

The Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT) will initiate and establish a cross-agency response team. Representation should include a wide range of perspectives, including: Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education, Office of Child and Family Services (child care licensing), Child Development Services Regional Hubs, Maine Roads to Quality Specialists, Help ME Grow, ECC for ME, and Head Start. Before starting the group, ELT should determine the scope of work for the group, expectations on participation (e.g., length of service), and other clarifying information.

Once established, the team could identify strategic technical assistance needs, such as targeted outreach to communities without publicly funded Pre-K, determine a regular meeting cadence, and consider how to connect with other working groups, such as the Mixed Delivery Team. The team could also have ad hoc meetings based on requests from SAUs or partners who are interested in or implementing public Pre-K partnerships.



Enabling Conditions

Effective implementation will depend on communities being aware of and feeling comfortable accessing the response team. One of the state positions recommended earlier (see [Recommendation 3.1](#)) could serve as a central point of contact to help develop outreach and communication strategies that ensure communities know how to access and use the resource.



Funding

No funding needs anticipated beyond the funding for the state positions described in [Recommendation 3.1](#).

Recommendation 4.1

4.1 Identify and implement statutory changes needed to include three-year-olds with Individualized Education Plans in public Pre-K.



Rationale

With the transition of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) responsibilities for three-year-olds with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to school administrative units (SAUs), public schools will now be required to serve this younger age group as part of their special education obligations. This represents a significant shift in who is served, how services are delivered, and what environments must be available to ensure that children receive appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Chapter 124 was written expressly for four-year-olds, the age group eligible for publicly funded Pre-K. As a result, the existing rule may not be aligned with what SAUs will need to provide to ensure developmentally appropriate care, programming, and environments for three-year-olds with IEPs. Before Chapter 124 can be revised, however, statutory language must first be updated to authorize how three-year-olds may be included in public Pre-K settings, even though the state would not fund general education slots for three-year-olds. Establishing this statutory authority is a necessary precursor to revising Chapter 124 so that rulemaking reflects the new legal landscape and ensures alignment across funding, governance, and program expectations.

Implementation



Action Steps

Maine Department of Education will need to initiate a statutory change. This process is currently active as of this publication.



Enabling Conditions

Input should be gathered from those with experience and expertise in working with three-year-olds with IEPs. This includes current care providers who already work with three-year-olds, child care providers who can speak to developmentally appropriate practice, and other early childhood professionals such as home visitors, special education teachers, and Maine Roads to Quality district coordinators. Their collective perspectives will help ensure that any changes reflect the developmental needs of young children and the practical realities of service delivery.



Funding

While the work on the statutory change will not have a fiscal cost, consideration should be given for how funding can be secured to support quality improvement as more three-year-olds are served in public Pre-K settings.

Recommendation 4.2

4.2 Implement updates to Chapter 124:

- a. Require partnership programs to be a Star 3 or higher on Rising Stars for ME.**
- b. Require a minimum of 5 days a week, with a minimum of 15 hours of programming a week.**
- c. Determine areas where the waiver process needs to be formalized.**
- d. Revise Section 12 to provide more in-depth information to school administrative units and private providers on the partnership process.**
- e. Revise Section 13 to provide more in-depth language on the transition process and, as needed, add in any updates on IDEA Part C to Part B transitions.**



Rationale

Since its creation 10 years, Chapter 124 has not undergone any updates. Given the significant shifts in policy and practice—most notably the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) transition, which will fundamentally change how three-year-olds with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are served— the Advisory Team determined now is the appropriate and necessary moment to revisit and revise Chapter 124 to align with current policies and to clarify where needed based on implementation experience. There were five areas the Advisory Team identified for updates, and the rationale and implementation plans are described below sub-recommendation by sub-recommendation.

For the Chapter 124 changes, in general, once any statutory changes have been made to Chapter 124 based on recommendation 4.1, the Maine Department of Education Early Learning Team (ELT) will open Chapter 124 and make changes as needed. A workgroup with a broad array of perspectives should be convened to drive this work.

4.2.a. Partnership Programs Star 3 or Higher on Rising Stars for ME



Rationale

This recommendation will align public Pre-K requirements with the FAPE transition, which requires a Star 3 rating on Rising Stars for ME to meet expectations for inclusive practices. Some Advisory Team members expressed concern about excluding Star 1 and 2 programs; however, Maine Roads Quality Specialists and Quality Improvement Awards funded through the Preschool Development Grant have already been helping programs progress toward Star 3, offering a supported pathway for programs not yet at a Star 3.

Implementation



Action Steps

Chapter 124 will need to be opened by the ELT to include this requirement.



Enabling Conditions

As noted earlier, creating awareness and encouraging participation in supports to move to Star 3 will be important for programs at Star 1 or 2 levels.⁵



Funding

None anticipated.

4.2.b Minimum of 5 days a week, with a minimum of 15 hours of programming a week.



Rationale

Current Chapter 124 rules require only 10 hours per week of Pre-K programming, which Advisory Team members indicated did not align with family needs or pedagogical practice. Many programs have already shifted to full-day schedules, with 55 percent of programs operating full day (25 hours or more per week). Yet some programs still operate only a few hours and/or days a week, with some districts offering am/pm or mixed days of programming. Many Advisory Team members emphasized that longer hours - ideally 6 hours per day, 5 days a week - better support working families and enhance food security for children who rely on school-based meals. They also expressed concern that without a minimum requirement, some programs might continue offering limited hours despite family needs. Other Advisory Team members noted that a small number of communities still prefer part-day models and that moving from 10 to 30 hours of programming a week was a major move that would take time. Ultimately, the Team acknowledged that immediately expecting programs to move from 10 to 30 hours per week could create too steep an onramp and potentially deter participation.

To balance these realities, the Team recommended an interim step: requiring public Pre-K programs to operate 5 days per week for at least 15 hours total, while setting a longer-term goal of transitioning statewide toward full-day, full-week Pre-K. Recognizing that equal funding for part-day and full-day programs unintentionally incentivizes shorter schedules, the Team also proposed a finance recommendation to adjust funding weights (0.5 for part-day, 1.0 for full-day) as part of an incremental, formula-first approach (see Recommendation 2.1.b).

Implementation



Action Steps

As part of implementation, it will be critical to prioritize proactive communication and relationship-building with providers who are not yet meeting the new minimum threshold. Action steps should include developing a clear outreach plan that explains the changes, why they are occurring, and what expectations providers can anticipate, as well as creating multiple avenues for two-way communication so providers can ask questions, share barriers to address, and receive timely guidance.



Enabling Conditions

Programs will need adequate physical space, classroom environments, and a workforce that can accommodate increased minimum hours, as well as guidance and supports on the additional operational demands of longer hours, which may include meals and transportation considerations. Family child care providers may also need tailored considerations, and the group advising on the language changes should engage with family child care providers to understand implications and potential support needs.



Funding

There is no expected cost to the state. However, the district/provider will likely experience higher costs if moving to new minimum hours, particularly if staffing needs increase.

4.2.c. Determine areas where the waiver process needs to be formalized.



Rationale

In practice, informal waivers are requested by some public Pre-K programs. These requests are reviewed by ELT staff and a determination is made on a case-by-case basis. To support a more streamlined and consistent system, the Advisory Team recommended creating a more formal process (e.g., a form) for these requests that would be on a program year or less approval basis. For example, some programs request a waiver for a slightly larger class size if they receive a request for a seat from someone who would have nowhere else to receive care, yet creation of a second classroom is not feasible. If the program has discussed with the educator and can show this will not disrupt programming, a waiver may be granted for the program year.

Implementation



Action Steps

A process will need to be created for school administrative units seeking a waiver on any standards in Chapter 124. This process will include a written request and justification for the waiver. Such language will need to be at minimum reviewed by Maine's Attorney General office, with the exception of certification matters which will need to be reviewed by Maine Department of Education's Office of Higher Education and Educator Services, Certification Team. The Advisory Team determined the formal request should include the following information to best inform decisions on approval or denial, most of which currently happen in the informal process:

- Number of children
- Square footage
- Purpose (e.g., shift of students)
- Staff credentials
- Staff support efforts
- Assure 1 year waiver
- Staff awareness of the waiver
- Communication to families about the waiver

As is current practice, a waiver will only be valid for the program year for which the waiver is requested. Public Pre-K programs will need to receive communication about the change and be able to easily access the waiver form.



Enabling Conditions

As the waiver process is designed, ensuring the language on forms and the process steps are accessible to all providers will be important.



Funding

No funding costs are anticipated for the language change.

4.2.d. Revise Section 12 (Partnership Process)



Rationale

The Advisory Team determined Section 12 on partnerships would benefit from more specific language for clarity and to support strong partnership practices. With the decade of experience since Chapter 124 was first written, much clearer insight into the key elements is available.

Implementation



Action Steps

The revised language in Section 12 should add clarity for supports and practices expected, such as collaborative professional development, communication plans with clear meeting cadence and expectations, and developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU). When revising, a careful balance should be taken to provide clarity, while also allowing for local flexibility to design a partnership to the context of the partners and community. Current language should be shifted to encourage expansion considerations. Care should be taken to consider the unique needs and constraints of family child care providers. The revised language should also specify Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) responsibilities by outlining who funds services and how they are defined, including adding a dedicated FAPE section and incorporating updated Section 12 language. The toolkit work outlined in Recommendation 3.2 should provide additional guidance on areas that are important to include.



Enabling Conditions

With clearer partnership guidelines, the state can communicate that updated expectations are available and how they support partnerships. The partnership roles identified in Recommendation 3.1 will be critical in sharing the updated language and provides supports to place them into practice. These materials can be incorporated into the partnership toolkit ([Recommendation 3.2](#)) for easy access.



Funding

No funding costs are anticipated for the language change.

4.2.e Revise Section 13 (Transitions)



Rationale

The Advisory Team identified a need for more detail and clarity in Section 13, particularly around the two-way nature of transitions, both from the Pre-K setting to K-12 and from IDEA Part C to Part B. The work conducted under [Recommendation 3.2](#) should provide areas to be included.

Implementation



Action Steps

Section 13 will be reviewed to determine what needs to be added. The toolkit process (see Recommendation 3.2) will be useful in identifying considerations for this section.



Enabling Conditions

Once the language is updated, it will be important to communicate the changes clearly to both school administrative units and private providers to build awareness and understanding. The state should also provide supports and resources to help stakeholders navigate the updates. These materials can be incorporated into the partnership toolkit ([Recommendation 3.2](#)) for easy access.



Funding

No funding costs are anticipated for the language change.

Order of Implementation

The recommendations outlined in this report vary in scope, complexity, and readiness for action. As a result, they are not intended to be implemented simultaneously. Some recommendations can begin immediately and make meaningful progress in the near term, while others require a longer time horizon. In addition, certain recommendations are interdependent and can only be effectively implemented once other recommendations are in place. The table below provides guidance on the recommended order of implementation to support sequencing, coordination, and sustained progress over time.

Table 1. Suggested Order of Implementation for Recommendations

Immediately	Within 3 Months	Once Statute Changes are Made	Once Chapter 124 Changes Are Made
Work on the following recommendations can commence immediately: 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.	Work on the following should be established within three months of the release of this report: 1.3, 2.2, 4.1.	Open Chapter 124 to implement technical rule changes for 1.1, 1.2, and 4.2.	Review and revise funding formula as needed in response to Chapter 124 revisions

ENDNOTES

¹ As of December 12, 2025, 698 educators hold the 081 and 748 hold the 029 (many of these work in grades K-3). The 081 is on the shortage list which means emergency certification standards apply to attain a conditional certification.

² The Advisory Team also noted that it would be useful to review out-of-state certifications and approval for teaching in ME public Pre-K programs. It was determined that this was beyond the scope of the Advisory Team as changes are complex and certification is a State Board of Education matter. Short-term recommendations include communicating the current process in place for reviewing and evaluating out-of-state certification.

³ Isolated, Small Schools are defined as: a PreK-8 school with less than 15 students per grade and more than 8 miles from the next nearest school and secondary schools with fewer than 200 students per school, the distance from the furthest point in the district is at least 18.5 miles, and the distance to the next high school is more than 10 miles.

⁴ At the time of this writing, this position is titled “Program Navigator”; however, this position will have a different title in late 2025 or 2026.

⁵ Advisory Team members also expressed concern about implications for programs at Star 5, who experience significant costs to reach and maintain a Star 5 without corresponding reimbursement, raising concerns about sustainability and the potential loss of programs that have historically met higher standards such as NAEYC accreditation. While outside the scope of this project, Advisory Team members shared it was important to highlight this concern and share potential paths forward. For example, incentives—similar to those used in Boston—may be needed to retain programs at the highest quality levels. To ensure coherence across systems, the state should map Level 4 expectations to Chapter 124 requirements and consider the broader implications of removing incentives tied to 5-Star or accredited status, including potential unintended consequences for quality.

Appendix A: Advisory Team Members

Families

- Angela Morse
- Jeannette Umugwaneza

School Administrative Units/ Providers

- Megan Barnes - Director of Programs for ECE, Aroostook County Action Program, Head Start
- Meghann Carrasco - Executive Director & Co-Founder, Seedlings to Sunflowers
- Annie Colaluca - Executive Director of Early Learning and Family Services, Bath YMCA
- Christine Fournier - Family Child Care Provider, Crayon Country Educational Childcare
- Christine Frost-Bertinet - Assistant Superintendent, RSU 14
- Dawn Moore - Principal, Leroy H. Smith School RSU 22
- Karen Moody - (Former) Principal, RSU 11
- Suzanne Pelkey - Assistant Manager of Program Development and Training, Bangor YMCA
- Heather Rockwell - Director, Curriculum and Academic Achievement, RSU 67

Maine Department of Education

Early Learning Team

- Lee Anne Larsen - Director of Early Learning
- Michelle Belanger - Pre-K Partnership Specialist
- Nicole Madore - Early Childhood Specialist
- Renee Reilly - Preschool Development Grant Manager

Head Start

- Stacie McCoy - State Head Start Collaboration Director

Office of Special Services & Inclusive Education

- Sandy Flacke - Deputy Director of Special Services

School Finance

- Paula Gravelle - Director of School Finance

Maine Governor's Office

- Ana Hicks - Policy Director, Human Services, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Office of Child and Family Services

- Tara Williams - Associate Director of Early Care and Education
- Meg Swanson - Program Manager, Early Care and Education Division

Child Care Licensing

- Jennifer Welch - Child Care Licensing Supervisor

Maine Child Development Services

- Amy Bragg - CDS Site Director for Two Rivers and CDS Downeast
- Lori Whittemore - Director of Preschool Development
- Jackie Hersom - Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network

- Jordan Detwiler-Michelson - Director
- Roy Fowler - Former Assistant Director
- Abigail Carter - Coordinator of Career Pathways

Higher Education Institutes and Career and Technical Assistance Programs

- Donna Karno - Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Maine at Farmington
- Jenny France - CTE ECE Instructor, Sommerset County Technical Center
- Melinda Reynolds - Early Childhood Education/Education Instructor, Washington County Community College

Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

- Eamonn Dundon - (Former) Director of Advocacy

Maine Children's Alliance

- Rita Furlow - Senior Policy Analyst