

Reinvigorating Visionary Leadership

Enhancing Collaborations and Input From the Field

ED# 2020-R1-I-0003



High-Leverage Problem

According to Maine's Education

Commissioner, the pandemic has stretched both the Maine Department of Education (DOE) staff and local educational leaders. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness of limited time, the Maine DOE sought to increase communication opportunities with the field. Specifically, the Maine DOE prioritized communications on supporting student engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic because of difficulties with remote learning and social isolation.

Key Milestones

- Organized and facilitated the forum on Student Attendance and Engagement.
- Convened three sessions in Year 2 that discussed successes, challenges, needs, and resources on topics such as addressing teacher shortages; guidance on attendance expectations; social-emotional learning and mental health supports; communication strategies; post-pandemic transition; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and educator support systems.
- Convened a fourth session in the beginning of Year 3 focused on Maine DOE resources including the Maine Online Opportunities for Sustained Education (MOOSE) modules and Making Access a Priority tools.
- Developed summaries that included (a) themes from each session and common issues, (b) potential strategies for addressing themes identified through the needs-sensing conversations, and (c) related resources.



R1CC Approach

The Region 1 Comprehensive Center supported the Maine DOE by organizing and facilitating the Stakeholder Conversation series, which convened educators and leaders from various educational organizations to discuss pressing topics. The series provided opportunities for Maine DOE to hear from the field on key policies, guidance materials, or emerging needs the DOE was considering or developing. The conversations assisted Maine DOE with needs assessment, stakeholder engagement, and data-driven decision-making.

Key Partner(s): Maine Department of Education

Outputs

- Agendas, slides, and meeting notes for three sessions
- Three memos developed after each session, outlining a summary of the discussion, feedback, and links to related resources

Outcomes

“I think they were flexible to change because we really needed to change the topic of the different forums to be relevant, and they were able to flex with that, which was really helpful to the work. And what they have produced as part of it, we’ve used and will continue to use, even in a deeper way. ... They certainly helped us achieve those more immediate goals as we went through [the forums].”