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JOINT RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW ENGLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL CONSORTIUM

WHEREAS, the New England Secondary School Consortium is a multistate partnership to promote and advance higher educational aspirations, performance and attainment among the adolescents of Maine, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont and it has been and will continue to be a force for enhancing the quality of Maine's system of public secondary education; and

WHEREAS, Maine must transform its educational policies, assessment practices, teaching strategies, professional development and state and local leadership to ensure that its students will not only be competitive with their peers across New England and the globe, but that every student graduates prepared for success in the colleges, careers and communities of the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, because education and high levels of postsecondary degree attainment are critical to workforce development, job creation and sustainable, long-term economic prosperity in the 21st century, it is critical that Maine strives to improve educational quality, opportunity and efficacy for its citizens through regional collaboration, resource sharing, expertise exchange and performance comparability; and

WHEREAS, the New England Secondary School Consortium is developing:

1. Internationally competitive learning models and programs at the secondary level that will redefine the traditional concept of the public high school to more effectively mirror the lives and learning needs of today's students;

2. Learning standards that reflect the ways in which our youth will live, work, learn and lead in the 21st century;

3. New state and local policies designed to stimulate educational innovation and creativity; and

4. Performance assessments that can more accurately measure the essential knowledge, skills and habits of mind that Maine students will apply throughout their lives and across all educational, career and civic contexts; and

WHEREAS, because the New England states share similar histories, educational systems, demographic populations, social challenges and interdependent economic prospects, the independent and collective interests of our states can be more effectively served through strategic partnerships that can improve the educational, career and life outcomes of our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the New England Secondary School Consortium is fostering a coordinated regional effort to build broad-based support for its major initiatives among educators, policy makers and business leaders, while also engaging parents and community members in the educational process through school involvement, positive messaging, community outreach and cross-state networking; and

WHEREAS, innovative regional collaborations have the potential to attract significant public and private investments, create a higher skilled workforce, attract new economic opportunities, drive sustained economic growth and improve the quality of life for all Maine residents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to express our strong support and endorsement of the New England Secondary School Consortium and its goals, strategies and partnerships; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable John E. Baldacci, Governor of Maine; the Maine Department of Education; the commissioners of education for Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island; the executive director of the Great Schools Partnership; the president of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation; and the director of education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.