

DEI in Education Law: Maine

Date: April 1, 2025.

Technical Objective: Identify and Assess Ideological Trends in a Large Corpus.

Subject: Maine's Education Statutes.

Data Acquisition: March 12, 2025.

Initial Review & Detection

State laws governing education are meant to ensure that all students receive high-quality instruction that equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after graduating. But many activists, lobbyists, legislators, and unelected agency bureaucrats have used education law to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals, even when these lower the quality of instruction, undermine school safety, and politicize the educational environment.

State legislators often blindly sign off on DEI principles, training, and education. In many cases, they are misled by DEI activists to believe that these efforts reduce discrimination and make schools and workplaces more welcoming. Yet research has consistently shown that DEI programs do not reduce discrimination and can even induce it through a backlash effect. This is because DEI heightens awareness of race, gender, sexuality, and other identities, leading people to think and act in more identity-based ways.

A researcher investigating DEI in state education law would typically need to review every statute and assess each one individually, not just for the terms that comprise the acronym but for adjacent concepts such as “cultural responsiveness” and “restorative practices.” Such an undertaking is a barrier to analysis, as there are 1,000+ statutes to examine. Using advanced machine learning, however, DeepAudit can scan all relevant statutes and objectively surface the most ideological sections.

Our subject of examination is the [Maine Revised Statutes Title 20-A: Education](#), which contains thousands of sections outlining education law in Maine.

Our machine learning agent reviewed every section and then used similarity algorithms to identify sections promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, decolonization, cultural sensitivity, culturally-responsive teaching, and disparate impacts by sex or race. A cosine similarity score was assigned to each section, with higher scores indicating a greater similarity to DEI content.

Below are the 10 sections out of 1,000+ statutes governing education the machine identified as most similar to content promoting DEI and related concepts.

Statute Section	Cosine Similarity (Standardized)
§6556. School resource officers	4.316346
§12991. Memoranda of understanding	3.816246
§12987. Awareness programming	3.141122
§12988. Training for Title IX coordinators, campus safety personnel and individuals involved in the disciplinary process	3.038142
§6. Gender equity hearings	2.893328
§4710. Kindergarten to grade 12 interventions	2.817714
§254. Educational duties	2.7746
§4252. Program	2.710001
§4706. Instruction in American history, African American studies, Maine studies, Wabanaki studies and the history of genocide	2.682156
§5161. Definitions	2.678965

In contrast, here are the 10 sections with the lowest cosine similarity scores, reflecting minimal DEI:

Statute Section	Cosine Similarity (Standardized)
§3655. Suit and service of process in New Hampshire	-2.46817
§3617. Posting and publication of warrant	-2.46515
§4804. Sunday holidays	-2.45857
§3601. Enters	-2.42878
§15913. School bus shelters	-2.42762
§3649. Valuation	-2.29192
§1257. Quorum	-2.23666
§15303. Treasurer of State as custodian	-2.22702
§3660. Suit and service of process in Maine	-2.22344
§3614. General	-2.21849

Assessment of Results

We reviewed the 100 sections with the highest similarity scores. After excluding 8 sections that were repealed and 78 sections that contained language similar to but not constituting DEI for the purposes of this investigation (i.e., sexual assault, mental health, disability, workforce/career, administrative), 14 sections remained.

For each of the 14 sections containing DEI, we provided a short summary of the section, quoted the elements of the section containing DEI, and bolded terminology related to DEI in red.

§6556. School resource officers.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires school resource officers (law enforcement working in schools) to complete DEI training.
- **DEI:**
 - “A school resource officer shall complete **diversity, equity and inclusion training** or **implicit bias training** at least once during that officer's first year of employment as a school resource officer.”

§12987. Awareness programming.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires institutions of higher education to provide mandatory prevention and awareness programming on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking for students of all incoming students and employees. Also requires these programs be available to returning students and employees.
- **DEI:**
 - “8. **Sensitivity; marginalized groups.** An approach to training that recognizes and is sensitive to the **disproportionate impacts** and rates of occurrence of sexual violence, intimate partner violence and stalking on members of **marginalized groups**, including but not limited to **people of color, people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.**”

§12988. Training for Title IX coordinators, campus safety personnel and individuals involved in the disciplinary process.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires institutions of higher education to ensure the Title IX coordinator, campus police force, and campus safety personnel undergo annual training in awareness of sexual violence, intimate partner violence and stalking and trauma-informed responses.
- **DEI:**
 - “E. **Cultural competency training** regarding how sexual violence, intimate partner violence and stalking may **affect students differently depending on factors that contribute to a student's cultural background**, including but not limited to **national origin, sex, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation**; [PL 2021, c. 733, §2 (NEW).]”
 - “F. Methods of communicating sensitively and compassionately with a reporting party including, but not limited to, **an awareness of responding to a reporting party with consideration of that party's cultural background** and providing services to or assisting in locating services for the reporting party; [PL 2021, c. 733, §2 (NEW).]”

§4706. Instruction in American history, African American studies, Maine studies, Wabanaki studies and the history of genocide.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires that elementary and secondary schools teach American history (with African-American studies as a component), Maine Studies (with Wabanaki studies as a component), and the history of genocide.
- **DEI:**
 - “**African American studies** must be included in the review of content standards and performance indicators of the system of learning results conducted in accordance with section 6209, subsection 4.”
 - “A required component of Maine studies is **Wabanaki studies**, and Wabanaki studies **may be taught as a component of other content areas**, as appropriate, including but not limited to the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and fine arts.”

§12853. Mission

- **Summary:**
 - Defines the mission of the Maine Area Health Education Centers System.
- **DEI:**
 - “The mission of the system is to improve the distribution, supply, quality, utilization and efficiency of health personnel in **underserved geographical, cultural or medical specialty areas** of the State by encouraging the regionalization and decentralization of educational responsibilities, and to **develop culturally appropriate clinical curriculums** at participating health professions schools. The system shall implement educational system incentives to attract and retain health care personnel in underserved areas and for **underserved cultural groups** through the: [PL 1991, c. 372, §2 (NEW).]
 - 1. Preceptorships. Development and implementation of preceptorships and other education programs in underserved areas and with **underserved cultural groups**; [PL 1991, c. 372, §2 (NEW).]
 - 2. Recruitment. Development and implementation of strategies to recruit representatives from **underserved geographical and cultural areas** into the health professions; [PL 1991, c. 372, §2 (NEW).]
 - 3. Retention. Development and implementation of strategies to encourage health professionals to practice and to remain in practice in **underserved geographical, cultural and medical specialty areas**; and [PL 1991, c. 372, §2 (NEW).]
 - 4. Linkage. Development and implementation of strategies to **link cultural and educational resources of communities** to the educational resources of participating health professions schools. [PL 1991, c. 372, §2 (NEW).]”

§256. Miscellaneous duties.

- **Summary:**
 - Outlines miscellaneous duties of the Commissioner of Education.
- **DEI:**
 - “The commissioner shall include in the annual report a listing of requests by school districts for **affirmative action workshops** and an assessment of the department's ability to meet past and projected demand for **in-service training related to affirmative action or gender equity**.”

§9101. Innovative Instruction and Tutoring Grant Program Fund; standards; tutoring plan.

- **Summary:**
 - Establishes the Innovative Instruction and Tutoring Grant Program Fund within the Department of Education to support instruction and tutoring programs to address learning loss.
- **DEI:**
 - “4. Priority. The commissioner shall prioritize grant awards for innovative instruction and tutoring program plans submitted pursuant to subsection 3 that address **educational disparities due to race or income**, serve students from low-income households or underserved students to address learning loss or unfinished learning due to extended gaps or interruptions in a student's education. The commissioner shall also prioritize grant awards for innovative instruction and tutoring program plans submitted pursuant to subsection 3 that include partnerships with community-based programs.”

§6555. Dangerous behavior prevention and intervention.

- **Summary:**
 - Outlines what a district must do upon receiving a report of an incident of dangerous behavior (one that presents a risk of injury/harm to student or others).
- **DEI:**
 - “If the report of the incident of dangerous behavior is substantiated, the school administrative unit shall, in consultation with the public school employee who was subjected to the dangerous behavior, if any, develop an individualized response plan to avoid future dangerous behavior, which may include but is not limited to:
 - **A. Minimizing suspension and expulsion of the student;** [PL 2019, c. 458, §1 (NEW).]
 - **B. Prioritizing counseling and guidance services for the student and educators;** [PL 2019, c. 458, §1 (NEW).]
 - **C. Providing positive behavioral interventions and supports and supports designed to address the consequences of trauma in the individual and training for the student and educators;** [PL 2019, c. 458, §1 (NEW).]
 - **D. Restorative practices and restorative interventions** as defined in section 1001, subsection 15-A, paragraph B; [PL 2021, c. 320, §4 (AMD).]”

§6557. Maine School Safety Center

- **Summary:**
 - Establishes the Maine School Safety Center within the Department of Education to assist schools in their efforts to provide for the overall safety of their school community.
- **DEI:**
 - “3. Services to schools. The center is responsible for providing the following services to schools in the State:
 - A. Training, including school safety specialist training and credentialing in a school emergency management education program; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - B. Mental health and behavioral threat assessment; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - C. Site assessment and **school climate assessment**; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - D. Planning and emergency operation plan review and exercises; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - E. **Training, procedures and best practices for school resource officers and officers that may have interactions with youth**; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - F. Best practices and policy recommendations and review; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - G. Administrative assistance; [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - H. **Restorative justice assistance and assistance regarding alternatives to traditional discipline**; and [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]
 - I. Contracted school safety services. [PL 2021, c. 542, §1 (NEW).]

§12984. Higher Education Interpersonal Violence Advisory Commission.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires the Higher Education Interpersonal Violence Advisory Commission to assess and improve the response to interpersonal violence at higher education institutions in Maine.
- **DEI:**
 - “2. Membership. The commission consists of the following 22 members:…
 - The following 9 members appointed by the commissioner:
 - A member representing a statewide coalition of sexual assault support centers;
 - A member representing an organization promoting **racial equity and justice**;
 - A member representing a **tribal coalition** against sexual assault and domestic violence;
 - A member representing a statewide organization for **disability rights**;
 - A member representing a statewide organization for **lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people**;
 - A member representing a national advocacy organization focused on passing state legislation written by students and survivors addressing campus sexual violence;
 - A member representing a statewide coalition of domestic violence resource centers;
 - A member representing an organization that advocates for **immigrant communities** in this State; and
 - A representative from a civil legal services provider representing sexual assault survivors; and [PL 2021, c. 733, §2 (NEW).]”
 - “9. Information to be gathered. The interpersonal violence climate survey must collect anonymous responses and may not require the disclosure of personally identifiable information. The survey must include the survey requirements of the federal Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, Public Law 117-103 and the survey must be designed, without being duplicative of the federal

requirements, to gather the following information:...

- H. Demographic information that could be used to **identify at-risk groups including but not limited to gender, race and sexual orientation**; [PL 2021, c. 733, §2 (NEW).]”

§6208. Legislative intent.

- **Summary:**
 - Outlines the legislature’s belief that all students can learn at significantly higher levels and so the education system must provide children with schools that reflect high expectations and create conditions in which these expectations can be met.
- **DEI:**
 - “The Legislature further finds that the system of learning results set forth in section 6209 and in department rules implementing that section and other curricular requirements will serve as a foundation for education reform, will promote assessment of student learning, will reinforce accountability and will **encourage equity**.”

§12986. Confidential resource advisors.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires all higher education institutions to designate a confidential resource advisor to support victims of sexual violence and harassment on an emergency and ongoing basis.
- **DEI:**
 - “3. Training. A confidential resource advisor must receive the following training:...
 - **B. Training regarding unconscious biases related to race, gender and sexuality**; [PL 2021, c. 733, §2 (NEW).]”

§6214. School accountability system; annual reports.

- **Summary:**
 - Requires the commissioner of education to implement a school accountability system to measure school performance.
- **DEI:**
 - “1. Performance measures. The measures of school performance for the school accountability system implemented under this section must include multiple measures of student achievement and:
 - A. Align with the components of the state accountability system required to **ensure equity in educational opportunity** by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, 20 United States Code, Section 6311(c) and related regulations; [PL 2015, c. 500, §1 (NEW).]...”

§4502. School approval requirements.

- **Summary:**
 - Outlines the requirements elementary and secondary schools must meet, and requires schools to put together a plan to achieve these requirements.
- **DEI:**
 - “4-A. **Affirmative action plan.** Each school administrative unit shall **develop an affirmative action plan** in accordance with Title 5, chapter 65 as part of the school approval process and update this plan annually as necessary. **The affirmative action plan** must include a description of the status of the **unit's nondiscriminatory hiring practice provided in section 1001, subsection 13** and **plans for in-service training programs on gender equity for teachers, administrators and school boards.** The unit shall submit any update of the plan annually to the commissioner.”

The 14 sections highlighted above demonstrate that DEI is codified in state Maine education law, principally in sections governing:

- **The Commissioner of Education.**
 - The Commissioner must include a list of requests by school districts for **affirmative action workshops**, and an assessment of the department's ability to meet future demand for **affirmative action and gender equity trainings**.
 - The Commissioner must prioritize grant awards for innovative instruction and tutoring from the Innovative Instruction and Tutoring Grant Program Fund that address **educational disparities due to race or income**.
 - The Commissioner must appoint 9 members to The Higher Education Interpersonal Violence Advisory Committee from groups including **a racial equity and justice** organization, a **tribal coalition** against sexual assault and abuse, a **disability rights** organization, an **LGBTQ+** organization, and an organization representing **immigrant communities**.
 - The Commissioner must implement a school accountability system that **ensures equity in educational opportunity** to align with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.
- **School Safety.**
 - School resource officers must complete a **DEI or implicit bias** training during their first year.
 - Sexual assault and violence prevention and awareness trainings in higher education must recognize and be sensitive to the **disproportionate impacts** of sexual assault and violence on members of **marginalized groups**.
 - Title IX coordinators, campus safety personal, and individuals involved in the disciplinary process at institutions of higher education must undergo annual sexual assault and violence awareness training, which must include **cultural competency** training on the **disparate impact** of sexual assault and violence by **identity group**, and how to communicate with a reporting party in a way that considers their **cultural background**.
 - When school districts receive a report of an incident of dangerous behavior, they must develop a response plan that **minimizes suspension and expulsions**, addresses the consequences of trauma for the individual, and includes **restorative practices and interventions**.

- Maine School Safety Centers must provide **school climate assessments, restorative justice** assistance, and assistance in providing **alternatives to traditional school discipline**.
- Higher education resource advisors who support victims of sexual assault and harassment **must receive training in unconscious biases related to race, gender, and sexuality**.
- **Content Standards.**
 - **African American studies** must be included in history instruction and when reviewing history standards, and Maine studies must include **Wabanaki studies**. Wabanaki studies may be **taught as a component of other subjects** such as English, math, science, and art.
 - The Legislature intends the Maine Learning Results and other related curricular requirements to **encourage equity**.
- **School Health.**
 - The Maine Area Health Education Centers System exists to provide more services to **underserved geographical and cultural communities**, develop **culturally appropriate curriculum**, and develop incentives to attract and retain healthcare personnel from **underserved areas and cultural groups**.
- **School Approval Requirements.**
 - Each school district must develop an **affirmative action plan** that describes the **status of the district's hiring practices** and **plans for in-service training programs on gender equity** for teachers, administrators and school boards.

Conclusion

DeepAudit's technology quickly and objectively assessed and surfaced evidence of DEI principles, compulsory practices, and required trainings within Maine's education statutes. While DEI references are concentrated in a relatively small subset of Title 20-A, they appear in multiple spheres, including school safety, training for school personnel, content standards, health education, and duties of the Commissioner of Education, thus opening the door to the implementation of ideological policies across the K12 education system. These statutes reflect Maine's legally-enshrined commitment to embedding DEI concepts in taxpayer-funded education.

By systematically identifying these statutes, we have shown that DEI in Maine education law can be objectively surfaced and examined. This provides a clear foundation for those who wish to understand, evaluate, or refine these legislative mandates. It also highlights how advanced machine learning can effectively parse large statutory corpora, revealing ideological or policy-driven content that might otherwise be overlooked. This report further demonstrates that ideologically driven policies can be implemented across a vast system by being embedded in a few statutes. The few sections containing DEI are concealed from public scrutiny by the 1,000+ statutes that obscure their existence.

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