



EDUCATION & CHILD CARE

Legislation and policies passed by Gov. Janet Mills and Democratic leaders in the Legislature are putting Maine children, students and educators first.

- **Support for K-12 schools.** In 2021, Gov. Mills and Democrats in the Legislature passed a budget that ensures Maine's classrooms are fully funded. This is the [first time](#) the state has met its legal obligation to fund public schools at 55% since voters approved the measure in 2004.
- **Making pre-K more accessible.** A new grant program from the Mills Administration will expand pre-K access to [more than 500 children](#) across the state.
- **Expanding child care.** Gov. Mills' historic [Child Care Plan for Maine](#) pulls together state and federal resources to address the child care crisis by waiving licensing fees to support existing and new child care centers, [boosting child care provider wages](#), expanding training for new child care workers, and providing subsidies to reduce child care costs for struggling Maine families.
- **Ending "child care deserts."** Democratic leaders in the House and Senate sponsored legislation to establish the [First 4 ME Child Care and Education Program](#), an initiative to create more child care slots in Maine to address "child care deserts" across the state.
- **Free community college.** As many as 8,000 young people in Maine will benefit from a program that provides two years of [free community college](#) for high school students who graduated in 2020, 2021 or 2022, as well as those set to graduate in 2023. The program, announced in 2021 by Gov. Janet Mills, led to a [12% increase](#) in enrollment in Maine's community colleges.
- **Growing vocational training programs.** Maine's community colleges will expand vocational training programs with support from a \$35 million grant from Gov. Mills' Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan. These tuition-free vocational training and certificate programs will train [more than 8,000 Mainers](#) for positions in health care, clean energy, manufacturing, hospitality, education, computer technology, and trades.
- **Increasing teacher pay.** To support Maine teachers and help recruit new instructors to the field, Gov. Mills and Democrats passed a budget in 2019 that set a [minimum annual salary of \\$40,000](#) for Maine educators.

- **Expanding apprenticeships.** An initiative announced earlier this year will [more than double](#) the number of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in Maine, including creating training programs in [50 new occupations](#). Since 2020, the average wage of Mainers who completed the programs increased by nearly 40%.
- **University of Maine System tuition freeze.** A bipartisan supplemental budget supported by Democratic leaders in the Maine Legislature and Gov. Mills will [freeze tuition costs](#) for in-state students at campuses in the University of Maine system by providing \$8 million in one-time funding to system.