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## News Release

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# **NMCC and University of Maine sign articulation agreement that will benefit both College students and preschool teachers throughout northern Maine**

**Aroostook County** - An agreement signed between Northern Maine Community College and the University of Maine at Orono will provide opportunity for both NMCC students and for pre-school teachers throughout Aroostook County, who recently learned they need to meet additional state certification requirements.

Officials with NMCC and U-Maine signed the articulation agreement today on the Presque Isle Community College campus in a classroom of a dozen early childhood education students taught by NMCC instructor Heidi Broad-Smith. The understanding will provide NMCC students in the early childhood education program with smooth transition into U-Maine's baccalaureate options in child development/family relations and early childhood education.

In addition, the agreement will be significant for pre-school, pre-kindergarten and Head Start teachers throughout northern Maine, who last year, as the result of a bill passed by the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, learned they would need to earn an additional endorsement to continue teaching in a public program for four year olds. Prior to the signing of the agreement, County teachers would have had to travel outside of the region to complete most of the necessary coursework to meet the certification requirements.

The bill, LD 560, recognized public four year old programs as distinct from a two-year kindergarten program. They are now defined as a "public preschool program." As part of the newly enacted law, teachers currently holding what are known as a K-3, K-8 or Birth-5 #282 endorsement will need to apply for a new endorsement - #081.

To gain the additional certification requirement, both new teachers desiring to teach at the pre-school level as well as existing teachers already working in programs for four year olds will be required to take a number of courses.

According to Broad-Smith, the classes include such topics as teaching early childhood special education, language development and early literacy, children's literature, numeracy for the young child, science for the young child, child development or developmental psychology and infant/toddler development.

"NMCC is in the unique position to help with the delivery of these courses as we already offer classes specific to the toddler and young child. By articulating with the University of Maine, NMCC will be able to deliver high-quality courses specific to the developing needs in the field," said Broad-Smith. "Teachers that are already teaching, with their existing certification, and need the specific classes to get the new endorsement, will be able to attend NMCC. Northern Maine, being so geographically large, will make taking these classes 'in their own backyard' much easier for already working teachers."

Under the articulation agreement the credits that current NMCC students, as well as the pre-school teachers from throughout the region earn at the Presque Isle College, will then transfer to U-Maine or be accepted by the State Department of Education for requirements toward the endorsement.

"A goal of the University of Maine is to foster collaborative agreements between academic units and community colleges. Early childhood education is a natural fit for our College and Northern Maine Community College," said Dr. Anne Pooler, interim dean of the College of Education and Human Development at U-Maine in a prepared statement. "On a personal note, I had the privilege of teaching in northern Maine as part of our Graduate Outreach Program for several years and was always pleased with the quality of the students and genuine 'County Attitude' and commitment to K-12 education."

Pooler was represented at the signing ceremony by Dr. Owen J. Logue, associate dean of academic services for the University's College of Education and Human Development.

"The signing of this agreement is significant as it will allow students graduating from NMCC's early childhood education program full transferability of credits into our bachelor of science degree. We are very excited for this partnership and look forward to enrolling many students from NMCC to UM," said Logue, who joined with Dr. Alan Punches, NMCC vice president and academic dean in making the agreement official.

"This Articulation Agreement between Northern Maine Community College and U-Maine will serve the people of the County and the surrounding area by allowing access to quality programming that can be used both before and after being certified in the teaching field," added Broad-Smith. "Students will benefit from the access to the coursework to receive the new endorsement, but the real winners will be the children of Maine. I know I speak on behalf of many educators when I say what a privilege it is that U-Maine has made this agreement with the College."

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