

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND SIXTEEN

—
S.P. 573 - L.D. 1475

An Act To Facilitate the Use of State Education Subsidies

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the changes made by this legislation could affect budget meetings of regional school units and town budgets; and

Whereas, it is necessary that this legislation take effect prior to the expiration of the 90-day period to allow towns to benefit from the legislation during the next annual budget process; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1485, sub-§5 is enacted to read:

5. Additional state subsidy. The warrant presented to the legislative body of the regional school unit at a regional school unit budget meeting may include an article or articles providing that, in the event that the regional school unit receives more state education subsidy than the amount included in its budget, the regional school unit board is authorized to use all or part of the additional subsidy to:

A. Increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the regional school unit board. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum;

B. Increase the allocation of finances in a reserve fund. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may increase the allocation of finances for a reserve fund approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum; or

C. Decrease the local cost share expectation, as defined in section 15671-A, subsection 1, paragraph B, for local property taxpayers for funding public education. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may decrease the local cost share expectation for local property taxpayers approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRS §1486, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. QQQ, §2, is further amended to read:

2. Validation referendum procedures. The budget validation referendum must be held on or before the 30th calendar day following the scheduled date of the regional school unit budget meeting. The referendum may not be held on a Sunday or legal holiday. The vote at referendum is for the purpose of approving or rejecting the total regional school unit budget approved at the regional school unit budget meeting. The regional school unit board shall provide printed information to be displayed at polling places to assist voters in voting. That information is limited to the total amounts proposed by the regional school unit board for each cost center summary budget category article, the amount approved at the regional school unit budget meeting, a summary of the total authorized expenditures and, if applicable because of action on an article under section 15690, subsection 3, paragraph A, a statement that the amount approved at the regional school unit budget meeting includes locally raised funds that exceed the maximum state and local spending target pursuant to section 15671-A, subsection 5. If the legislative body of the regional school unit at the regional school unit budget meeting approves an article pursuant to section 1485, subsection 5, the substance of the article must be included in the printed information displayed at polling places for the budget validation referendum.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.