

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Allow a 4-day School Week

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4801, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2009, c. 87, §1, is further amended to read:

1. Number. A school administrative unit shall make provision for the maintenance of all of its schools for at least 180 days a year or for an equivalent amount of student instruction accomplished by an alternative school calendar of 4 days of student instruction per week. At least 175 days ~~shall~~ or an equivalent must be used for instruction. In meeting the requirement of a 180day school year or an equivalent, no more than 5 days or an equivalent may be used for in-service education of teachers, administrative meetings, parent-teacher conferences, records' days and similar activities.

A. The commissioner may reduce or waive the minimum number of days or an equivalent required on application from a school board. The commissioner may authorize an equivalent number of hours to be substituted for days for a limited time period upon application from a school board. The application must be supported in writing with a statement of the reasons for the request.

B. Notwithstanding any other section of the statutes, school committees, with the approval of the commissioner, may adopt or amend rules necessary to implement an extended school year at the local level. The commissioner may make appropriate adjustments, not to exceed the allowable subsidy, to insure fair and equitable treatment in the distribution of state aid.

C. Notwithstanding this subsection, the commissioner shall ~~promulgate~~ adopt a rule to provide that local school units may allow secondary school students to graduate up to 5 school days prior to the regular end of the school year.

D. A school administrative unit, operating under a plan approved by the commissioner, may provide for the use of up to 5 of the 175 instructional days or an equivalent required by this section to be used for screening incoming first year students for the purpose of identifying children with disabilities and students at risk of school failure as required by state or federal law.

E. Notwithstanding this subsection and any other provision of law, for school years 1991-92 and 1992-93, a school administrative unit may reduce the number of days for the maintenance of all its schools by 5 days a year. A school administrative unit that decides to reduce the number of school days for school year 1991-92 or 1992-93, or both, shall notify the commissioner in writing of its plan.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §15689, sub-§5, ¶B, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. D, §60 and affected by §§72 and 74 and c. 12, Pt. WW, §18, is amended to read:

B. The rate of reimbursement per student may not exceed the state average tuition rates in effect during the year of placement as computed under sections 5804 and 5805. The tuition rates must be computed based on the state average secondary tuition rate and may be adjusted if the program is approved to operate beyond the 180-day school year or an equivalent in the case of a school administrative unit that uses an alternative school calendar pursuant to section 4801, subsection 1.

Sec. 3. Rules. The Department of Education shall adopt rules or amend its rules as is necessary to comply with the provisions of this Act. Rules adopted or amended pursuant to this section are major substantive rules as described in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2A.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes a school administrative unit to use an alternative school calendar of 4 days of student instruction per week if that calendar provides for an amount of student instruction equivalent to that provided by a traditional school calendar.