

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
(New Title)
New Draft of S. P. 243, L. D. 734

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1810

S. P. 518

In Senate, May 26, 1977

Reported by Senator Usher of Cumberland from Committee on Education.
Sent down for concurrence and printed under Joint Rules No. 2.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

**AN ACT to Establish an Assessment of Student Performance
in the Basic Skills.**

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

Whereas, the citizens of the State of Maine have a deep and abiding interest in the quality of education offered to the youth of this State; and

Whereas, it is deemed to be of vital importance that every child learn certain basic skills such as reading, writing and the everyday use of arithmetic prior to graduation from high school; and

Whereas, the learning of these basic skills, the successful completion of certain courses and the recommendations of educators should all be factors to be considered in the awarding of high school diplomas; and

Whereas, it is the intent of the Legislature to implement an assessment of student performance in the basic skills to provide a foundation of information necessary for the preparation of policy to meet the educational needs of children; 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. Preparation of the educational assessment. The Commissioner of Educational and Cultural Services is directed to proceed in the preparation of an assessment of basic skills. In preparing this educational assessment, the commissioner shall proceed as follows.

A. The commissioner shall obtain a broad consensus of the views of Maine citizens on this important matter by soliciting such opinion through surveys, public hearings and such other means as he may deem appropriate. In the process of soliciting the opinion of Maine citizens, the commissioner shall be assisted by a panel of citizens which shall include representation from the State Board of Education, the Joint Standing Committee on Education, the Maine Education Council, the teaching profession and the general public.

B. The commissioner shall prepare appropriate assessment materials designed to measure the performance levels of high school juniors in the basic skills area in accordance with the citizen opinion to be gathered in paragraph A, and with the advice and assistance of a panel of persons knowledgeable in the area of educational testing. This assessment of basic skills will be conducted in all Maine high schools prior to January 1, 1978.

Sec. 2. Report. The commissioner shall prepare a report to be submitted not later than February 1, 1978, to the Governor and the Membership of the 108th Legislature, which report shall summarize the findings of the opinion gathering and assessment activities prescribed in section 1, and shall further include such recommendations for policy action at the state level as are deemed to be appropriate.

Sec. 3. Appropriation. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Educational and Cultural Services, the sum of \$48,000 for the fiscal year 1977-78 to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1977-78
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES,	
DEPARTMENT OF	
All Other	\$48,000

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act shall take effect when approved.

FISCAL NOTE

It is estimated that the cost of administering the assessment of high school juniors would be \$43,000.

In addition to this cost, it is estimated that \$5,000 would be necessary to carry out the statewide consensus activities identified in this new draft.

STATEMENT OF FACT

There is widespread concern that some students graduate from high school without the minimum abilities to read, write or do simple computations. The

purpose of this new draft is to determine the extent that this situation exists as a basis for preparing policy to meet the educational needs of Maine children.

The Commissioner of Educational and Cultural Services is directed to obtain a consensus of what basic skills Maine people expect from high school graduates and to prepare an assessment of those skills. The commissioner is to report to the Legislature in February, 1978, with the results of the consensus and assessment with recommendations for any legislation necessary to meet the identified needs of children.

A statewide assessment will be given which will be coordinated with the assessment program known as the Maine Assessment of Educational Progress.