

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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122nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2005

Legislative Document

No. 1386

H.P. 963

House of Representatives, March 22, 2005

An Act Concerning Town Academies and the System of Learning Results

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative CUMMINGS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator MITCHELL of Kennebec and
Representatives: MUSE of Fryeburg, TARDY of Newport, THOMPSON of China,
VALENTINO of Saco, Senators: SCHNEIDER of Penobscot, WESTON of Waldo.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1, sub-§39-A** is enacted to read:

6 39-A. Town academy. "Town academy" means a private school approved for tuition purposes under section 2951 that enrolls at least 60% publicly funded students and that is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges pursuant to section 2901, subsection 2, paragraph A.

10 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §2901, sub-§2, ¶A**, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

14 A. Currently accredited by the New England Association of ~~Colleges and Secondary Schools~~ Colleges and Colleges; or

16 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §6202-A, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 712, §2, is further amended to read:

20 **4. Graduation decisions at town academies.** By the 2007-2008 school year, high school graduation for publicly funded students in nonaccredited private schools approved for tuition that enroll at least 60% publicly funded students or town academies, as determined by the previous school year's October and April average enrollment, must be determined by student achievement of the standards of the system of learning results in English language arts, health and physical education, mathematics, science and technology, and social studies, in addition to other requirements that may be established by the trustees. By the 2009-2010 school year, high school graduation for publicly funded students in ~~private schools~~ town academies must be determined by student achievement of the standards of the system of learning results in all content areas of the system of learning results, in addition to other requirements as established approved by the trustees. The trustees of each town academy shall approve an assessment system that ensures students have access to courses, opportunities and services that enable the students to show growth in academic progress and achievement of standards of the system of learning results. The assessment system approved by the trustees under this subsection may use alternative methods of assessing a portfolio of each student's work, including, but not limited to, academic performance, common assessments of the student's work, standardized tests, standards-based course design, community service and extracurricular activities.

46 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §6209, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2001, c. 454, §31, is further amended to read:

50 The department in consultation with the state board shall establish and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of

2 learning results, referred to in this section as the "system," no
later than the 2002-03 school year. The system, based broadly
4 upon guiding principles set forth in this section, must establish
high academic standards at all grade levels in the areas of math;
6 English; science and technology; social studies, including
history, economics and civics; career preparation; visual and
8 performing arts; health and physical education; and foreign
languages. Only students in a public school, a town academy or a
nonaccredited private school approved for tuition that enrolls at
10 least 60% publicly funded students, as determined by the previous
school year's October and April average enrollment, are required
12 to participate in the system of learning results. The
commissioner shall develop accommodation provisions for instances
14 where course content conflicts with sincerely held religious
beliefs and practices of a student's parent or guardian. The
16 system must be adopted to accommodate exceptional students as
defined in section 7001, subsection 2. Student achievement of
18 the standards of the system in town academies must be determined
in accordance with section 6202-A, subsection 4.

20 **Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §15671, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

22 **8. Students educated at private schools.** The tuition
24 charged for students at private schools is governed by the
provisions of chapter 219.

28 SUMMARY

30 This bill does the following:

32 1. Changes "New England Association of Colleges and
Secondary Schools" to "New England Association of Schools and
34 Colleges" to reflect its new name;

36 2. Defines "town academy" as a private school approved for
tuition that enrolls at least 60% publicly funded students and
38 that is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and
Colleges;

40 3. Clarifies the existing law concerning compliance by
schools with the system of learning results by specifying what
42 town academies must use for measuring compliance in lieu of the
44 local assessment system used in public schools; and

46 4. Adds a reference in the essential programs and services
law to the current law governing the maximum allowable tuition

2 rate that may be charged by private schools for students educated at public expense.