

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1404

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H.P. 926

House of Representatives, April 1, 2025

### **Resolve, to Create a Working Group on the Status of School Libraries and on Public Libraries in Maine**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R B. Hunt", is positioned above the printed name of the Clerk.

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative MURPHY of Scarborough.  
Cosponsored by Senator RAFFERTY of York and  
Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, CARLOW of Buxton, CRAFTS of Newcastle,  
DODGE of Belfast, KUHN of Falmouth, MITCHELL of Cumberland, SALISBURY of  
Westbrook, Senator: LIBBY of Cumberland.

1       **Sec. 1. State Librarian to convene working group. Resolved:** That the State  
2 Librarian shall convene a working group on the status of school libraries and public  
3 libraries in the State, referred to in this resolve as "the working group."

4       **Sec. 2. Working group membership. Resolved:** That the working group  
5 consists of 15 members as follows:

- 6           1. The State Librarian;
- 7           2. The President of the Maine Library Association or the president's designee;
- 8           3. The President of the Maine Association of School Libraries or the president's  
9           designee;
- 10          4. A representative of the Maine Principals' Association, appointed by the  
11          Commissioner of Education;
- 12          5. A representative from the Maine School Superintendents Association, appointed by  
13          the Commissioner of Education;
- 14          6. Three representatives of nonprofit public libraries, who must be from libraries of  
15          different sizes and from different regions of the State and one of whom must be a member  
16          of that representative's library governing board, appointed by the President of the Maine  
17          Library Association;
- 18          7. Two representatives of municipal public libraries, who must be from libraries of  
19          different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the President of the  
20          Maine Library Association;
- 21          8. Three representatives of public school libraries, who must be from schools of  
22          different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the board of the Maine  
23          Association of School Libraries;
- 24          9. One staff member of the Department of Education, appointed by the Commissioner  
25          of Education; and
- 26          10. One staff member from the library development division within the Maine State  
27          Library, appointed by the State Librarian.

28       **Sec. 3. Chair. Resolved:** That the State Librarian is the chair of the working group.

29       **Sec. 4. Convening of working group. Resolved:** That the chair shall call the  
30 first meeting of the working group within 45 days of the effective date of this resolve. A  
31 majority of the working group membership constitutes a quorum. The member of the  
32 working group who is a staff member from the library development division within the  
33 Maine State Library shall take minutes at each meeting, which must be posted on the Maine  
34 State Library's publicly accessible website within 5 business days of the meeting.

35       **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the working group shall study:

- 36           1. Library services for specific segments of the State's population, including  
37           individuals 55 years of age and older, individuals with disabilities, youth and children,  
38           immigrant and migrant communities, tribal communities and individuals residing in remote  
39           areas of the State;

1           2. The role that libraries play in emergency preparedness; cultural diversity and  
2 inclusion; public health and safety; community identity and resiliency; economic  
3 development; and access to public services and resources; and

4           3. The current overall status of public and school libraries in the State, which may  
5 include information related to partnerships, resources, facilities, technology and staffing.

6           In the performance of its duties under this section, the working group shall solicit input  
7 from the general public and library users across the State.

8           **Sec. 6. Study guidance. Resolved:** That, in performing the duties under section  
9 5, the working group may:

10           1. Assess current community, county and state partnerships with public and school  
11 libraries and identify gap areas and potential additional partners, including an assessment  
12 of regional partnerships based on areas of need in each region;

13           2. Study the size and diversity of library holdings and assess the strengths of and gaps  
14 in materials available to residents of the State, including an assessment of how resources  
15 are shared across different libraries and communities and how to best find economies of  
16 scale through shared resources among public and school libraries;

17           3. Study the status of public and school library facilities across the State, with a focus  
18 on how to improve accessibility, safety and energy efficiency while still accounting for  
19 historic preservation and local community needs;

20           4. Study whether public and school libraries in the State have sufficient access to basic  
21 technological resources, cybersecurity resources, electronic catalogs, interlibrary loan  
22 services and appropriate hardware and software to address community member needs;

23           5. Study staffing levels at public and school libraries in the State, whether staffing  
24 levels are sufficient to meet user needs, how libraries use volunteers and what resources  
25 are available for workforce development and training of library staff;

26           6. Solicit input from the Maine Library Commission; and

27           7. Examine models for library management and organization in other states, including  
28 the formation of statewide service networks.

29           **Sec. 7. Staff assistance; mileage reimbursement. Resolved:** That the Maine  
30 State Library shall provide administrative, technical and legal assistance to the working  
31 group, including contracting with an outside facilitator with experience in leading  
32 community and library discussions to assist the State Librarian with meeting facilitation  
33 and organization.

34           Members of the working group are entitled to mileage reimbursement from the Maine  
35 State Library for travel to in-person meetings at the same rate as under the Maine Revised  
36 Statutes, Title 5, section 8 for not more than 12 meetings.

37           **Sec. 8. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than November 1, 2027, the State  
38 Librarian shall submit a report based on the study under section 5 for presentation to the  
39 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural  
40 affairs. The report must include:

41           1. Specific and detailed findings and proposals concerning the issues studied by the  
42 working group;

2. Recommendations for updating the Maine Revised Statutes, agency rules and governance structures of public and school libraries in the State to ensure equitable access for residents of the State, efficient use of resources and high quality in the provision of services;

3. Recommendations related to the funding needs of public and school libraries in the State, including capital, ongoing and special funding; and

4. Any other information or recommendations the working group determines necessary to include in the report.

The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs is authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

## SUMMARY

This resolve directs the State Librarian to convene a working group on the status of school libraries and public libraries in the State. The working group is required to study:

1. Library services for specific segments of the Maine population;

2. The role that libraries play in emergency preparedness; cultural diversity and inclusion; public health and safety; community identity and resiliency; economic development; and

3. Access to public services and resources; and the current overall status of school and public libraries in the State, including information on partnerships, resources, facilities, technology and staffing.

The State Librarian is required to submit a report of the working group's findings and recommendations by November 1, 2027 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs, which is authorized to report out legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.