

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 1 FY 97/98
DATE July 1, 1997

**AN ORDER TO REVISE AND IMPROVE
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION POLICY**

WHEREAS, a sensible and predictable program for public financing of local school construction is essential to the goal of maintaining and improving the quality of public education in Maine;

WHEREAS, the historical lack of a comprehensive statewide strategy for public investment in both new construction and renovation of existing school facilities has resulted in unmet school construction needs;

WHEREAS, Maine now faces increasing school construction needs due to increased and redistributed student populations, historical under-funding of maintenance costs for existing schools, strained local budgets, and limited State contributions to school construction;

WHEREAS, many Maine communities are struggling with overcrowded school buildings, obsolete or inadequate facilities for the demands of modern education programs, as well as a significant increase in use of portable leased classrooms to meet pressing space needs; and

WHEREAS, these problems require immediate and decisive action to identify the true scope of local school construction needs throughout the State and to prepare a feasible plan for public financing of both existing and future school construction needs;

WHEREAS, it is essential that we make the most efficient use of available school construction funds, and, thereby, assure the public these tax dollars are being spent wisely;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Angus S. King, Jr., Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Commission on School Facilities as follows:

1. Purpose and Charge

The Governor's Commission on School Facilities ("Commission") shall conduct a comprehensive review to determine the true scope of local school construction needs throughout the State and prepare a feasible plan for public financing to meet current and future school construction needs. In so doing, the Commission shall:

a. identify the true scope of local school construction and renovation needs, drawing upon the information supplied by local school districts, as well as the findings of the Review Committee established by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and the Department of Education to review the Health and Safety of School Buildings Report, prepared by the University of Maine;

b. prepare a recommended plan for a sensible and predictable program of public financing of the verified statewide local school construction and renovation needs that makes the most efficient use of available school construction funds;

c. review and analyze current Maine law, regulations, and policies controlling school construction, including, but not limited to, new construction, renovations, leased space, and maintenance and capital improvement plans in order to determine where changes are needed and provide any recommended revisions in current state law, regulations and policy in order to implement the recommended plan.

2. Report

The Commission shall hold statewide public hearings in order to obtain public input. The Commission shall prepare a summary of its review and recommended plan in draft form no later than December 1, 1997. The Commission shall incorporate public comments as appropriate and prepare any necessary legislation to implement its recommendation.

No later than February 1, 1998, the Commission shall submit its final report, accompanied by any proposed implementing legislation, regulations or policies, to the Governor and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

3. Membership

The Governor's Commission on School Facilities may have up to 10 members, all to be appointed by the Governor no later than July 21, 1997. The Commission shall be composed of members of interested groups, including school administrative units, municipal governments, the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the

Department of Administrative and Financial Services, and the public. Members shall be chosen in order to achieve the broadest possible representation of Maine's geographical regions and the full spectrum of local school construction needs and financing abilities. The Governor shall also appoint a Committee on Technical Expertise composed of Architects, Engineers, Builders and Sub Contractors to provide technical expertise to the Commission. The Chair of the State Board of Education's School Construction Committee shall serve as the Chair of the Commission. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

4. Funding and Staff

Public members may be compensated for reasonable travel expenses by the Department of Education upon demonstration of need. The Department of Education and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services shall provide the staff from existing resources to the Commission.

5. Termination

The Commission shall terminate upon submission of the final report to the Governor and the Legislature.

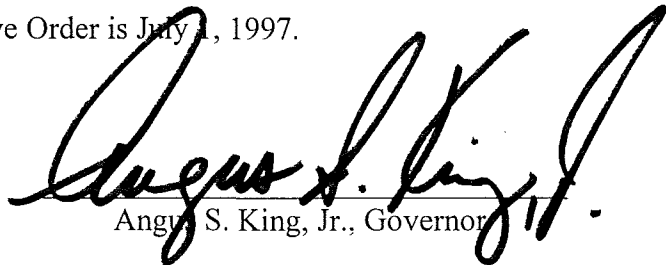
6. State Review Committee

The Commissioner of the Department of Education and the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services shall establish a Review Committee of qualified individuals to review the Health and Safety of School Buildings Report prepared by the University of Maine. The Committee shall:

- a. review the data collected by the University of Maine through its school survey in preparation of the Health and Safety of School Building Report; and
- b. analyze the accuracy and completeness of that data and prepare a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor's Commission on School Facilities no later than August 1, 1997.

7. Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is July 1, 1997.


Angus S. King, Jr., Governor