

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 734**

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S. P. 243

In Senate, March 8, 1977

Referred to the Committee on Education. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

Presented by Senator Katz of Kennebec.

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-SEVEN

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**AN ACT to Establish a Program for the Basic Attainment of Skills  
in Children.**

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

20 MRSA c. 114, is enacted to read:

**CHAPTER 114  
BASIC ATTAINMENT OF SKILLS IN CHILDREN**

§ 1301. Short title

This chapter may be cited as the **Basic Attainment of Skills in Children** program.

§ 1302. Intent

It is the intent of the Legislature that every child should learn certain basic skills such as reading, writing and the everyday use of arithmetic prior to graduation from high school.

It is further the intent of the Legislature that the learning of these skills, the successful completion of certain courses and the recommendations of teachers shall be factors considered in the awarding of diplomas to secondary school students.

It is further the intent of the Legislature that local units shall be responsible for determining the means by which each will pursue the goals of **Basic Attainment of Skills in Children**.

It is further the intent of the Legislature that a program which shall be called the **Basic Attainment of Skills in Children** should be established as the basis for the learning of certain minimum skills.

§ 1303. Preparation of program

The Commissioner of Educational and Cultural Services is directed to proceed in the preparation of a **Basic Attainment of Skills in Children** program. In preparing this program the commissioner shall proceed as follows:

1. **Statewide consensus.** Through surveys, public hearings and meetings throughout the State and any other means which he may deem useful, the commissioner shall obtain a consensus as to the nature and level of basic skills which Maine citizens believe should be a partial condition for graduation from secondary school. In obtaining this consensus the commissioner shall be ever mindful of the need to include the views of as many citizens as possible representing the entire range of public opinion.

2. **Uniform test.** Based on the consensus obtained, the commissioner shall prepare a test for the attainment of basic skills which shall be given during the senior year of high school.

§ 1304. Report

The commissioner shall report to the Second Regular Session of the 108th Legislature in January, 1978 the results of section 1303 and present any legislation necessary to establish the **Basic Attainment of Skills in Children** program.

### 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 bill is to establish that the learning of certain basic skills will be considered, along with teachers' recommendation and the student's school record as factors in determining the awarding of a diploma.

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 a test for those skills. The commissioner is to report to the Legislature in January, 1978 with the results of the consensus, the plans for the test and any legislation necessary to implement the program.

A single test will be given statewide. Local units are given complete responsibility for any action that may be taken locally to implement the program and encourage successful completion of the tests by high school seniors.