

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 114th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION - 1989

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Legislative Document

No. 39

H.P. 39

House of Representatives, January 30, 1989

Reported by Representative HANDY for the Special Commission on Early Childhood Development and Education pursuant to Resolve 1987, chapter 110.

Reference to the Joint Standing Committee on Education suggested and printing ordered under Joint Rule 18.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed Pert".

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

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STATE OF MAINE

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IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE

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**AN ACT to Establish Appropriate Class Size in the Early Elementary Grades.**

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

3 **20-A MRSA §4502, sub-§2-A is enacted to read:**

5 2-A. Class size for early elementary school grades. The  
7 maximum student-teacher ratio per classroom for grades  
7 kindergarten through grade 4 shall be as follows.

9 A. For kindergarten and transition to first grades:

11 (1) For school years 1990-91 and 1991-92, the ratio  
13 shall be 22 to 1;

15 (2) For school years 1992-93 and 1993-94, the ratio  
15 shall be 19 to 1; and

17 (3) For school year 1994-95 and thereafter, the ratio  
19 shall be 15 to 1.

21 B. For grades 1-4:

23 (1) For school years 1990-91 and 1991-92, the ratio  
23 shall be 25 to 1;

25 (2) For school years 1992-93 and 1993-94, the ratio  
27 shall be 22 to 1; and

29 (3) For school year 1994-95 and thereafter, the ratio  
29 shall be 18 to 1.

31 C. Rules shall be adopted in accordance with subsection 5,  
33 paragraph B which establish appropriate higher ratios in  
33 classrooms where a teacher aide or assistant is employed.

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### STATEMENT OF FACT

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39 This bill is part of the legislative recommendations of the  
39 Special Commission to Study Early Childhood Development and  
41 Education. The commission was directed to study the issue of  
41 class size and to make recommendations for change by Resolve  
43 1987, chapter 110.

43

45 The early years of schooling are critical in the lives of  
45 young children. It is in the early elementary years that the  
47 pattern of success or failure is often established. Because  
47 children develop at very different rates, it is essential that an  
49 individualized, developmentally appropriate curriculum be  
49 available to all children. In order for schools to develop and  
51 provide appropriate programming for each child, classes must be  
51 limited to sizes which permit tailoring the curriculum to  
individual needs.

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Research by the National Association for the Education of  
Young Children and other groups indicates that the class sizes  
targeted in this bill for grades kindergarten through 4 will  
establish a better learning environment, allow for more  
individualized instruction and encourage better student  
achievement.

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The bill provides for phasing in the targeted  
student-teacher ratios over 5 years. This is a conservative  
approach recognizing the costs involved. The bill also permits  
higher ratios in classrooms where teacher aides or assistants are  
present under rules adopted by the commission and the State Board  
of Education.

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