

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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L.D. 1346

DATE: 4-6-00

(Filing No. H-1079)

MAJORITY  
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
119TH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 949, L.D. 1346, Bill, "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the School Administrative District Budget Approval Process"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'An Act to Improve the School Administrative District and Community School District Budget Development and Approval Process'

Further amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

'Sec. 1. 20-A MRS A §405, sub-§10 is enacted to read:

10. Comprehensive school budget approval procedure. The state board shall develop a model comprehensive school budget approval procedure and, working in conjunction with the department, strongly encourage school administrative units to adopt and implement the model as local school board policy. The model procedure must be designed to provide early and continuous collaboration between school officials and municipal officials and to encourage frequent opportunity for public comment in the development of each unit's annual budget.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRS A §1304, sub-§6, as enacted by PL 1983, c. 770, §1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

6. Written ballot. An article must be voted on by written ballot if at least 10% of those present and voting vote to use a written ballot. The department, in consultation with municipal and school officials and with organizations representing those officials, shall develop and distribute guidelines to assist district budget meeting moderators in explaining and implementing this subsection.

2           **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §1305, first ¶**, as amended by PL 1987, c.  
4           637, §1, is further amended to read:

6           If requested before January 31, 2001 by a written petition  
8           of at least 10% of the number of voters voting in the last  
          gubernatorial election in the municipalities within the district,  
          the board of directors shall cause the following article to be  
          voted on by the voters of the member municipalities.

10           "Shall School Administrative District No..... require that  
12           the voting at future district budget meetings and special  
14           district budget meetings be done by referendum within each  
          member municipality of the district instead of using the  
          district meeting procedure?

16           Yes           No           "

18           **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §1305, sub-§4**, as repealed and replaced by  
20           PL 1987, c. 637, §2, is repealed.

22           **Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §§1305-A and 1305-B** are enacted to read:

24           **§1305-A. Cost center summary alternative budget format**

26           Notwithstanding sections 1302, 1305, 1306, 1307 or 15617,  
28           after January 31, 2001, the format of the annual budget of a  
          school administrative district may be changed only in accordance  
          with this section and section 1305-B.

30           1. Cost center summary budget format. The school  
32           administrative district budget must consist of the following cost  
          centers and supporting data:

34           A. Expenditures:

36                   (1) Prekindergarten to grade 12 instruction;

38                   (2) Instructional support;

40                   (3) Leadership;

42                   (4) Operations;

44                   (5) Transportation; and

46                   (6) Other commitments;

48           B. Revenue sources:  
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- 2           (1) Foundation allocation;
- 4           (2) Debt service allocation, if any; and
- 6           (3) Additional local funds;
- 8           C. A summary of total school administrative district  
expenditures; and
- 10           D. Other optional local data showing the amount and  
percentage of changes proposed in the state allocation, the  
local share and the total school administrative district  
budget and related information determined appropriate by the  
board of directors.

16           2. Budget warrant. The warrant articles presented to the  
legislative body of the school administrative district for  
approval of the school administrative district budget must  
correspond to the categories of the cost center summary budget  
described in subsection 1. In addition to expenditure and  
revenue cost center summary totals, the board of directors shall  
provide to voters a reasonably detailed breakdown for each major  
subcategory within each budget category. The department shall  
adopt routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375,  
subchapter II-A defining and establishing the content of those  
informational subcategories.

28           3. Approval of cost center summary budget format. An  
article to establish the cost center summary budget format may be  
placed on a warrant for a referendum vote by either a majority  
vote of the board of directors or a written petition filed with  
the board of directors by at least 10% of the number of voters  
voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities  
in the school administrative district. The board of directors  
shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an  
earlier one if determined appropriate by the board of directors.  
If adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format  
takes effect in the next budget year or in the following budget  
year if the approval occurs less than 90 days before the start of  
the next budget year. Once adopted by the voters, the cost  
center summary budget format may not be changed. In a school  
administrative district using the district budget meeting process  
provided in sections 1303 and 1304 or a budget format other than  
one established by the school administrative district voters  
under section 1306, the cost center summary budget format may be  
adopted and subsequently amended or repealed by majority vote of  
the board of directors.

50           4. Budget approval. A school administrative district's  
cost center summary budget must be approved at a school

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administrative district budget meeting as provided in sections 1303 and 1304 or by a district budget meeting and budget validation referendum as provided in section 1305-B.

**5. Transfer between budget cost center lines.** During the year for which the budget is approved using the cost center summary budget format, the board of directors may transfer an amount not exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers without voter approval.

**§1305-B. Budget validation referendum**

Notwithstanding sections 1302, 1305, 1306, 1307 and 15617, after January 31, 2001, the procedure for approval of the annual budget of a school administrative district provided under sections 1304 and 1305 may be changed only in accordance with this section and section 1305-A. The budget validation referendum process provided in this section may not be adopted for use in a school administrative district unless the cost center summary budget format provided in section 1305-A is also adopted. A school administrative district using the alternative voting procedures established in section 1305 may reconsider that use only if as part of that reconsideration the voters adopt use of the cost center summary budget format provided in section 1305-A or the cost center summary budget format and the budget validation referendum process provided in this section.

**1. Budget validation.** Following development of the annual school administrative district budget and approval at a district budget meeting as provided in section 1305-A, a referendum may be held in the school administrative district as provided in this section to allow the voters to validate or reject the total budget adopted at the district budget meeting.

**2. Approval of budget validation referendum process.** An article to establish the budget validation referendum process or the cost center summary budget format together with the budget validation referendum process may be placed on a warrant for a referendum vote by either a majority vote of the board of directors or a written petition filed with the board of directors by at least 10% of the number of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities in the school administrative district. The board of directors shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the board of directors. If adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format or the budget validation referendum process takes effect beginning in the next budget year or the following budget year if the adoption occurs less than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once

2 approved by the voters, the cost center summary budget format and  
3 the budget validation referendum process may not be changed.

4 3. Validation referendum procedures. The budget validation  
5 referendum must be held on the 3rd day, other than Saturday,  
6 Sunday or a legal holiday, following the scheduled date of the  
7 district budget meeting. The vote at referendum is for the  
8 purpose of approving or rejecting the total district budget  
9 approved at the district budget meeting. The board of directors  
10 shall provide printed information to be displayed at polling  
11 places to assist voters in voting. That information is limited  
12 to the total amounts proposed by the board of directors for each  
13 cost center summary budget category article, the amount approved  
14 at the district budget meeting and a summary of the total  
15 authorized expenditures.

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17 If approved by the voters of the school administrative district,  
18 an advisory question may be added to the budget validation  
19 referendum ballot allowing voters to indicate whether they find  
20 the budget too high or too low. The issue of whether to place  
21 the advisory question on the ballot may be considered by the  
22 voters as part of the adoption of the budget validation  
23 referendum process or may be submitted to the voters separately  
24 for approval following the procedures described in subsection 2.

25 4. Budget validation referendum voting. The method of  
26 calling and voting at a budget validation referendum is as  
27 provided in sections 1352 and 1353, except as otherwise provided  
28 in this subsection or as is inconsistent with other requirements  
29 of this section.

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31 A. A public hearing is not required before the vote.

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33 B. The warrant for a district budget meeting to be followed  
34 by a budget validation referendum may be a consolidated  
35 warrant covering both.

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37 C. The warrant and absentee ballots must be delivered to  
38 the municipal clerk at least 7 days before the date of the  
39 district budget meeting.

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41 D. Absentee ballots received by the municipal clerk may not  
42 be processed or counted unless received after the conclusion  
43 of the district budget meeting and before the close of the  
44 polls.

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46 E. All envelopes containing absentee ballots received  
47 before the conclusion of the district budget meeting or  
48 after the close of the polls must be marked "rejected" by  
49 the municipal clerk.

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F. The article to be voted on must be in one of the following forms.

(1) In school administrative districts that have not approved inclusion on the ballot of the advisory question described in subsection 3, the article must be substantially as follows.

"Shall the School Administrative District No. \_\_\_\_\_ budget for the \_\_\_\_\_ school year that was adopted at the district budget meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ be approved?"

Yes No"

(2) In school administrative districts that have approved the inclusion on the ballot of the advisory question described in subsection 3, the article must be substantially as follows.

"Shall the School Administrative District No. \_\_\_\_\_ budget for the \_\_\_\_\_ school year that was adopted at the district budget meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ be approved?"

Yes No"

The following is a nonbinding expression of opinion for the consideration of the school administrative district board of directors.

"I find the budget adopted at the district budget meeting to be:

Too high Too low"

5. Failure to approve budget. If the voters do not validate the budget approved in the district budget meeting at the budget validation referendum vote, the board of directors shall hold another district budget meeting in accordance with sections 1303 and 1304 at least 10 days after the referendum to vote on a budget approved by the board of directors. The budget approved at the district budget meeting must be submitted to the voters for validation at referendum in accordance with this section. The process must be repeated until a budget is approved at a district budget meeting and validated at referendum. If a budget is not approved and validated before July 1st of each year, section 1308 applies.

6. Reconsideration of budget validation referendum process. Every 3 years, school administrative districts that have accepted the budget validation referendum process shall consider continued use of the process. The warrant at the budget validation referendum in the 3rd year following adoption or continuation of the referendum process must include an article by which the voters of the school administrative district may indicate whether they wish to continue the process for another 3 years. A vote to continue retains the process for 3 additional years. A vote to discontinue the process ends its use beginning with the following budget year and prohibits its reconsideration for at least 3 years.

Sec. 6. 20-A MRS §1308, as amended by PL 1991, c. 429, §3, is further amended to read:

**§1308. Failure to pass budget**

If a budget for the operating of the district is not approved prior to July 1st, the latest budget as submitted by the board of directors is automatically considered the budget approved for operational expenses for the ensuing year until a final budget is approved, except that, when the school board delays the school budget meeting in accordance with section 15617, subsection 2, paragraph C, the operating budget must be approved within 30 days of the date the commissioner notifies the school board of the amount allocated to the school unit under section 15613 or the latest budget submitted by the directors becomes the operating budget for the next school year.

Sec. 7. 20-A MRS §1701, sub-§7, as enacted by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

7. **Majority vote.** A majority vote of those voters present and voting shall be necessary for the approval of the annual budget. An article must be voted on by written ballot if at least 10% of those present and voting vote to use a written ballot. The department, in consultation with municipal and school officials and with organizations representing those officials, shall develop and distribute guidelines to assist district budget meeting moderators in explaining and implementing this subsection.

Sec. 8. 20-A MRS §1701, sub-§9, ¶A, as amended by PL 1983, c. 485, §17, is further amended to read:

A. The budget format may be determined by the voters of a community school district by adoption of an appropriate warrant article at a properly called election held in

2 accordance with the procedure set forth in section ~~15515~~  
15617, subsection 6.

4 **Sec. 9. 20-A MRSA §1701, sub-§11, ¶B,** as enacted by PL 1981,  
6 c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

8 B. Unless authorized by the voters or except as provided in  
10 section 1701-A, subsection 5, the district school committee  
12 may not transfer funds between line item categories.

14 **Sec. 10. 20-A MRSA §1701, sub-§12,** as enacted by PL 1981, c.  
16 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

18 12. **State-local allocations.** To summarize the action taken  
20 on the budget for the purposes of determining the community  
22 school district's state-local allocations, the articles  
24 prescribed in chapter 605, ~~shall~~ 606 must also be voted on.

26 **Sec. 11. 20-A MRSA §§1701-A and 1701-B** are enacted to read:

28 **§1701-A. Cost center summary alternative budget format**

30 Notwithstanding section 1701, after January 31, 2001, the  
32 format of the annual budget of a community school district may be  
34 changed only in accordance with this section and section 1701-B.

36 **1. Cost center summary budget format.** The community school  
38 district budget must consist of the following cost centers and  
40 supporting data:

42 **A. Expenditures:**

44 (1) Prekindergarten to grade 12 instruction;

46 (2) Instructional support;

48 (3) Leadership;

50 (4) Operations;

(5) Transportation; and

(6) Other commitments;

**B. Revenue sources:**

(1) Foundation allocation;

(2) Debt service allocation, if any; and

(3) Additional local funds:

C. A summary of total community school district expenditures; and

D. Other optional local data showing the amount and percentage of changes proposed in the state allocation, the local share and the total community school district budget and related information determined appropriate by the community school district school committee.

2. Budget warrant. The warrant articles presented to the legislative body of the community school district for approval of the community school district budget must correspond to the categories of the cost center summary budget described in subsection 1. In addition to expenditure and revenue cost center summary totals, the district school committee shall provide to voters a reasonably detailed breakdown for each major subcategory within each budget category. The department shall adopt routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A defining and establishing the content of those informational subcategories.

3. Approval of cost center summary budget format. An article to establish the cost center summary budget format may be placed on a warrant for a referendum vote by either a majority vote of the district school committee or a written petition filed with the committee by at least 10% of the number of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities in the community school district. The district school committee shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the district school committee. If adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format takes effect in the next budget year or in the following budget year if the approval occurs less than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format may not be changed. In a community school district using a budget format other than one established by the community school district voters under section 1701, subsection 9, the cost center summary budget format may be adopted and subsequently amended or repealed by majority vote of the district school committee.

4. Budget approval. A community school district's cost center summary budget must be approved at a community school district budget meeting as provided in section 1701, subsection 3 or 8 or by a district budget meeting and budget validation referendum as provided in section 1701-B.

5. Transfer between budget cost center lines. Notwithstanding section 1701, subsection 11, paragraph B, during

the year for which the budget is approved using the cost center summary budget format, the district school committee may transfer an amount not exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers without voter approval.

**§1701-B. Budget validation referendum**

After January 31, 2000, the procedure for approval of the annual budget of a community school district provided under section 1701 may be changed in accordance with this section and section 1701-A. The budget validation referendum process provided in this section may not be adopted for use in a community school district unless the cost center summary budget format provided in section 1701-A is also approved.

**1. Budget validation.** Following development of the annual community school district budget and approval at a district budget meeting as provided in section 1701-A, a referendum may be held in the community school district as provided in this section to allow the voters to validate or reject the total budget adopted at the district budget meeting.

**2. Approval of budget validation referendum process.** An article to establish the budget validation referendum process or the cost center summary budget format together with the budget validation referendum process may be placed on a warrant for a referendum vote by either a majority vote of the district school committee or a written petition filed with the district school committee by at least 10% of the number of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities in the community school district. The district school committee shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the committee. If adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format or the budget validation referendum process takes effect beginning in the next budget year or the following budget year if the approval occurs less than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once adopted by the voters, the cost center summary budget format and the budget validation referendum process may not be changed.

**3. Validation referendum procedures.** The budget validation referendum must be held on the 3rd day, other than Saturday, Sunday or a legal holiday, following the scheduled date of the district budget meeting. The vote at referendum is for the purpose of approving or rejecting the total community school district budget approved at the district budget meeting. The district school committee shall provide printed information to be displayed at polling places to assist voters in voting. That

1 information is limited to the total amounts proposed by the  
2 committee for each cost center article, the amount approved at  
3 the district budget meeting and a summary of the total authorized  
4 expenditures.

5 If approved by the voters of the community school district, an  
6 advisory question may be added to the budget validation  
7 referendum ballot allowing voters to indicate whether they find  
8 the budget too high or too low. The issue of whether to place  
9 the advisory question on the ballot may be considered by the  
10 voters as part of the adoption of the budget validation  
11 referendum process or may be submitted to the voters separately  
12 for approval following the procedures described in subsection 2.

13 4. Budget validation referendum voting. The method of  
14 calling and voting at a budget validation referendum is as  
15 provided in sections 1352 and 1353 for school administrative  
16 districts, except as otherwise provided in this subsection or as  
17 is inconsistent with other requirements of this section.

18 A. A public hearing is not required before the vote.

19 B. The warrant for a district budget meeting to be followed  
20 by a budget validation referendum may be a consolidated  
21 warrant covering both.

22 C. The warrant and absentee ballots must be delivered to  
23 the municipal clerk at least 7 days before the date of the  
24 district budget meeting.

25 D. Absentee ballots received by the municipal clerk may not  
26 be processed or counted unless received after the conclusion  
27 of the district budget meeting and before the close of the  
28 polls.

29 E. All envelopes containing absentee ballots received  
30 before the conclusion of the district budget meeting or  
31 after the close of the polls must be marked "rejected" by  
32 the municipal clerk.

33 F. The article to be voted on must be in one of the  
34 following forms.

35 (1) In community school districts that have not  
36 approved inclusion on the ballot of the advisory  
37 question described in subsection 3, the article must be  
38 substantially as follows:

39 "Shall the Community School District No. \_\_\_\_\_  
40 budget for the \_\_\_\_\_ school year that was adopted

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2 at the district budget meeting on be  
approved?

4 Yes No"

6 (2) In community school districts that have approved  
8 the inclusion on the ballot of the advisory question  
described in subsection 3, the article must be  
substantially as follows.

10 "Shall the Community School District No.  
12 budget for the school year that was adopted  
14 at the district budget meeting on be  
approved?"

16 Yes No"

18 The following is a nonbinding expression of  
20 opinion for the consideration of the community  
school district school committee.

22 "I find the budget adopted at the district budget  
meeting to be:

24 Too high Too low"

26  
28 **5. Failure to approve budget.** If the voters do not  
validate the budget approved in the district budget meeting at  
30 the budget validation referendum vote, the district school  
committee shall hold another district budget meeting in  
32 accordance with section 1701, subsection 8 at least 10 days after  
the referendum to vote on a budget approved by the committee.  
34 The budget approved at the district budget meeting must be  
submitted to the voters for validation at referendum in  
36 accordance with this section. The process must be repeated until  
a budget is approved at a district budget meeting and validated  
at referendum. If a budget is not approved and validated before  
38 July 1st of each year, the latest budget submitted by the  
committee is automatically considered the budget for operational  
40 expenses for the ensuing year until a final budget is approved,  
except that when the school committee delays the district budget  
42 meeting in accordance with section 15617, subsection 2, paragraph  
C the operating budget must be approved within 30 days of the  
44 date the commissioner notifies the school committee of the amount  
allocated to the school unit under section 15613 or the latest  
46 budget submitted by the committee becomes the operating budget  
for the next school year.

48  
50 **6. Reconsideration of budget validation referendum  
process.** Every 3 years, community school districts that have

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2 accepted the budget validation referendum process, shall consider  
4 continued use of the process. The warrant at the budget  
6 validation referendum in the 3rd year following adoption or  
8 continuation of the referendum process must include an article by  
10 which the voters of the community school district may indicate  
12 whether they wish to continue the process for another 3 years. A  
14 vote to continue retains the process for 3 additional years. A  
16 vote to discontinue the process ends its use beginning with the  
18 following budget year and prohibits its reconsideration for at  
20 least 3 years.

12 **Sec. 12. 20-A MRSA §15614, sub-§§3 and 4, as enacted by PL**  
14 **1983, c. 859, Pt. G, §§2 and 4, are amended to read:**

14 **3. Additional local appropriation.** A school administrative  
16 unit may raise and expend funds for educational purposes in  
18 addition to the funds under subsections 1 and 2. An article in  
20 substantially the following form must be used when a school  
22 administrative unit is considering the appropriation of  
24 additional local funds:

22 "Article : To see what sum the municipality/district  
24 will raise and to appropriate the sum of (Recommend \$ )  
26 in additional local funds for school purposes under the  
28 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15614."

28 **4. Vote.** Actions in subsections 1 to 3 shall must be taken  
30 by a recorded vote.

30 **Sec. 13. 20-A MRSA §15618-A, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1989, c.**  
32 **615, §1, is repealed.**

34 **Sec. 14. 20-A MRSA §15618-A, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1989, c.**  
36 **615, §2, is repealed.**

36 **Sec. 15. Implementation and evaluation of State Board of Education**  
38 **recommendations.**

38 **1. State Board of Education study.** Not later than July 1,  
40 2003, the State Board of Education shall convene a study  
42 committee to review all aspects of the implementation of the  
44 school budget format and voting procedure recommendations  
46 contained in its Report on School Governance to the Joint  
48 Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs issued on  
50 January 15, 2000. The study must review and assess the impact of  
implementation of the recommendations and determine whether  
additional changes are necessary, including, but not limited to,  
an evaluation of whether school administrative districts and  
community school districts need additional options to change  
their budget format or procedure once the recommendations of the

state board are adopted. The state board shall report its findings, including any necessary implementing legislation, to the Second Regular Session of the 121st Legislature and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters not later than January 31, 2004.

**2. Interim monitoring and reporting by the Department of Education.** Beginning January 31, 2001 and continuing until January 31, 2003, the Department of Education shall annually report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters on the experiences of school administrative districts and community school districts with the implementation of the cost center summary budget format and the budget validation referendum process. The report must include a summary of the number and types of school administrative units utilizing the new budget format and voting procedure, the types of budget formats and voting procedures used by each unit, the impact of the new budget format and procedure on budget adoption in the units, including the date of final budget adoption and frequency of repeat votes required, and concerns identified with the new format and procedure that require action before completion of the State Board of Education review provided in subsection 1.

**3. Resource assistance team.** The Department of Education and the State Board of Education, following consultation with the Maine School Management Association and the Maine Municipal Association, shall establish a resource assistance team as a source of assistance available to school administrative units with questions about adopting the new budget format and procedure or implementation of the old or new budget procedures. The resource assistance team must be in place by September 1, 2000. The experiences of the resource assistance team must be included in the department's annual report to the joint standing committee.'

Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the summary the following:

**FISCAL NOTE**

The State Board of Education will incur some minor additional costs to convene a study committee, submit the required report and establish a resource assistance team in conjunction with the Department of Education. These costs can be absorbed within the board's existing budgeted resources.

The additional costs associated with submitting the required reports and establishing a resource assistance team in

conjunction with the State Board of Education can be absorbed by the Department of Education utilizing existing budgeted resources.'

### SUMMARY

This amendment is the majority report of the committee and replaces the bill. The amendment establishes an optional new school budget cost center format and budget approval process for use by school administrative districts and community school districts. The new options replace format and approval options that are available under current law and that will no longer be available for adoption, but, if in place, may continue to be used. No district will be required to adopt either the new format or the budget approval process. However, after the effective date of this Act, if a district wishes to change the format or process it currently uses, the new options will be the only alternatives available. Both the budget format and the budget approval process may be adopted by the voters of the district at referendum. In certain circumstances, the new format may also be adopted by the local school board on its own initiative. The cost center summary budget format may be adopted separately or the new format and the approval process may be adopted together to complement each other.

The new optional budget format consists of 6 standard expenditure areas and 3 standard revenue areas, each with accompanying plain language explanations. There is also an overall summary expenditure item. The 9 cost centers and summary under the new budget format form the basis for the budget warrant articles that are submitted to district voters for approval annually. The amendment authorizes school boards to transfer up to 5% of the school budget between budget cost centers without voter approval.

The new optional budget approval process allows district voters to add a 2nd step to the process for finalization of the school budget. If the new process is adopted by voters, after initial approval of the district budget at a district budget meeting, the total budget approved must be submitted to the voters of the district for final validation at a district referendum within 3 days of the district budget meeting. If the voters reject the budget at referendum, another budget must be considered at a district budget meeting at least 10 days after the referendum. The budget adopted at the subsequent district budget meeting must then be submitted to the voters for validation in a separate referendum vote. The process is

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repeated until a final budget is approved at a district budget meeting and validated at referendum.

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4       The amendment directs the State Board of Education to  
develop a model comprehensive school budget approval procedure  
6 that maximizes local collaboration among school officials,  
municipal officers and the public in developing and approving  
8 school budgets and encourages school administrative units to  
adopt the procedure as local school policy. The amendment also  
10 requires the state board to study the new budget format and  
approval process and to report back to the joint standing  
12 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education  
matters by January 31, 2004. In the interim, the Department of  
14 Education is directed to monitor the impact of the new law and to  
report annually to the committee on its effect, and the  
16 Department of Education and the State Board of Education are  
charged with the responsibility of developing a system to provide  
18 assistance to school administrative units wishing or attempting  
to implement the law.