

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

Legislative Document

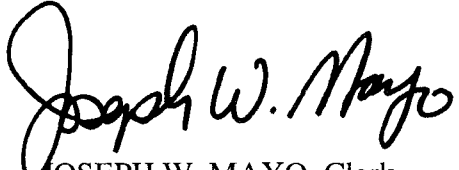
No. 1776

H.P. 1247

House of Representatives, March 9, 1999

An Act to Establish a Standard Line-item Budget Format for All School Budgets.

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


JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative NASS of Acton.
Cosponsored by Representative AHEARNE of Madawaska.

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

2
3 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §15617, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 1993, c.
4 435, §§6 and 7, is further amended to read:

6 **1. Content.** A school administrative unit shall include in
7 its school budget document:

8
9 A. Its foundation allocation, its debt service allocation,
10 if any, and any additional expenditures authorized by
11 statute;

12
13 B. A summary statement of all anticipated revenues
14 according to each source of such revenues, whether local,
15 state, federal or other private sources, and estimated the
16 precise amount of all school expenditures for the fiscal
17 year according to the proposed budget; and

18
19 C. The following statement, including the estimated dollar
20 amount of state retirement payments: "This budget does not
21 include the estimated amount of \$..... in employer share
22 of teacher retirement costs that is paid directly by the
23 State";

24
25 D. The estimated number of students that will be enrolled
26 in the school unit during the school year for which the
27 budget is being proposed; and

28
29 E. The proposed per pupil costs for that school unit that
30 must be determined by dividing the precise amount of all
31 school expenditures for the fiscal year according to the
32 proposed budget by the estimated number of students that
33 will be enrolled in the school unit during the school year
34 for which the budget is being proposed.

36 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §15617, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 1983, c.
37 859, Pt. G, §§2 and 4, is repealed and the following enacted in
38 its place:

40 **3. Budget format.** The following provisions apply to a
41 budget format.

42
43 A. Except as provided in subsections 4 and 5, the budget
44 format submitted to the voters must be organized in a
45 line-item format. At a minimum, the line-item format must
46 allow the voters to vote on specific sums for:

48 (1) Instructional salaries and fringe benefits;

50 (2) Operation and maintenance of school facilities;

- 2 (3) Transportation;
4 (4) Developmental education;
6 (5) Vocational education;
8 (6) Athletics;
10 (7) Administration;
12 (8) Construction projects or capital purchases;
14 (9) Contracted services; and
16 (10) Instructional support, which includes sums for
18 school supplies, textbooks, noncapital equipment,
 instructional-related professional services, travel and
 conferences and staff development activities.

20 B. The voters of any school administrative district may
22 vote to adopt an alternative budget format to the format
 prescribed by this section in accordance with section 1306.

24 C. A school board shall attempt to obtain public
26 participation in the development of the school budget.

28 Pursuant to section 15621, the commissioner shall adopt rules
30 governing the budget format of all school administrative units
32 that have not adopted an alternative budget according to this
34 section, and those rules must permit the continued use of any
36 line-item format that has been adopted by the voters of any
38 school unit prior to the effective date of the rules first
 adopted by the commissioner that are substantially similar in
 effect to the line-item format established by this section. The
 commissioner shall adopt rules that allow the transfer of funds
 among line-item categories. Rules adopted pursuant to this
 subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,
 chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

40 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §15617, sub-§§5 and 6, as amended by PL 1989,**
42 **c. 104, Pt. C, §§8 and 10, are further amended to read:**

44 **5. Budget format; town meeting.** When the final budget
46 authority is vested in a town meeting operating under the general
48 enabling procedures of Title 30-A, the format of the school
 budget may be determined by the town meeting or under the
 procedures of Title 30-A, section 2522-~~e~~ 2528.

50 **6. Budget format; community school district.** The following
 provisions shall apply to the budget format of a community school
 district.

2 A. An article containing the district's proposed budget
format shall must be placed on the next warrant issued or
4 ballot printed if:

6 ~~(1) -- A majority of the district school committee votes
to place it on the warrant or ballot, or~~

8
10 (2) A written petition of at least 10% of the number
of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in
12 each municipality within the community school district
request it to be on the ~~warrant or~~ ballot.

14 B. The article containing the budget format may must be
voted on by secret ballot at an election conducted in
16 accordance with Title 30-A, sections 2528 to 2532.

18 C. The district school committee shall:

20 (1) Issue a warrant specifying that the municipal
officers of the municipalities within the community
22 school district place the budget format article on the
secret ballot; and

24
26 (2) Prepare and furnish the required number of ballots
for carrying out the election, including absentee
ballots.

28

30

SUMMARY

32 This bill changes the school budget format from
appropriating gross revenues to the school unit as a general rule
34 to a procedure to implement a line-item budget format. This bill
establishes a uniform, 10-category line-item budget format that
36 would apply to all school budgets, while retaining an authority
for the voters to adopt alternative budget formats at
38 referendum. The details of the line-item budget format are to be
developed by the Commissioner of Education through rulemaking.
40 School units that have already adopted line-item formats are
grandfathered from any regulatory requirement to amend their
42 formats. This bill also makes explicit the detail of revenue,
expenditure, enrollment and per pupil expenditure information
44 that must be a part of the school budget documents.