

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 124th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2009

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Legislative Document

No. 128

H.P. 112

House of Representatives, January 15, 2009

### **An Act To Require the Teaching of Agricultural Studies in Maine's Schools**

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Reported by Representative PIEH of Bremen for the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 660, section 18. Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed under Joint Rule 218.

*Millicent M. MacFarland*  
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND  
Clerk

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

2 **Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §242, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 456, §2, is amended to  
3 read:

4 **2. Purpose.** The purpose of the council is to promote an understanding of the food  
5 and fiber system in the State and the nation through the infusion of agricultural concepts  
6 into primary, secondary and postsecondary curricula. The council shall help prepare for  
7 the inclusion of agricultural concepts into the required course in agricultural studies as  
8 specified in Title 20-A, section 4706, subsection 3. For the purposes of this section and  
9 Title 20-A, section 4706, subsection 3, "agricultural concepts" includes, but is not limited  
10 to:

- 11 A. The importance of agriculture in the State and in the nation's history and  
12 development;
- 13 B. The connections between geography, climate and agriculture;
- 14 C. The relationship between technology and agricultural success and development;
- 15 D. The economics of agriculture;
- 16 E. The global aspects of agriculture; and
- 17 F. The relationship of the food and fiber system to public policy issues.

18 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §4706**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 510, Pt. B, §5, is further  
19 amended to read:

20 **§4706. Instruction in American history, Maine studies, Maine Native American**  
21 **history and agricultural studies**

22 American history and Maine studies and agricultural studies must be taught as  
23 specified in the system of learning results established in section 6209.

24 **1. American history.** American history and civil government, including the  
25 Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the importance of  
26 voting and the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, must be taught in and  
27 required for graduation from all elementary and secondary schools, both public and  
28 private.

29 **2. Maine studies.** Maine history, including the Constitution of Maine, Maine  
30 geography and environment and the natural, industrial and economic resources of Maine  
31 and Maine's cultural and ethnic heritage, must be taught. A required component of Maine  
32 studies is Maine Native American studies, which must be included in the review of  
33 content standards and performance indicators of the learning results conducted in  
34 accordance with section 6209, subsection 4. The Maine Native American studies must  
35 address the following topics:

- 36 A. Maine tribal governments and political systems and their relationship with local,  
37 state, national and international governments;

1 B. Maine Native American cultural systems and the experience of Maine tribal  
2 people throughout history;

3 C. Maine Native American territories; and

4 D. Maine Native American economic systems.

5 **3. Agricultural studies.** Agricultural concepts as described in Title 7, section 242,  
6 subsection 2 must be taught and included in the review of content standards and  
7 performance indicators of the system of learning results conducted in accordance with  
8 section 6209, subsection 4.

9 **Sec. 3. Recommendations for the inclusion of agricultural studies to the**  
10 **system of learning results.** The Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council, as  
11 established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 242, and the Department of  
12 Education shall develop recommendations for instruction of agricultural studies to be  
13 included in the system of learning results established in Title 20-A, section 6209.

14 **Sec. 4. Report.** The Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council and the  
15 Department of Education shall report their recommendations developed pursuant to  
16 section 3 to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint  
17 Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry no later than January 15,  
18 2010.

19 **Sec. 5. Report must include plan to assist school administrative units.**  
20 The recommendations under section 4 must include provisions for assistance to the  
21 Department of Education in helping school administrative units implement instruction in  
22 agricultural studies. The recommendations must also include criteria to identify school  
23 administrative units having difficulty meeting the instructional requirements of  
24 agricultural studies and the provision for assistance to these school administrative units.  
25 The recommendations for assistance must be established by July 30, 2012 and  
26 implemented during the 2012-2013 school year.

27 **Sec. 6. Implementation of agricultural studies subject to availability of**  
28 **funds.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4706,  
29 subsection 3, a school administrative unit is not required to take any action that  
30 necessitates additional expenditures from local revenues unless the Department of  
31 Education pays for 90% of the additional costs. Implementation of instruction in  
32 agricultural studies is at the discretion of the school administrative unit if additional local  
33 expenditures are required for implementation and the department has not paid its share of  
34 the additional local costs.

35 A school administrative unit that determines that it is unable to implement instruction  
36 in agricultural studies within existing state and local resources shall present its findings  
37 and supporting evidence to the Department of Education. The department shall review  
38 the school administrative unit's findings and evidence and, if necessary, assist the school  
39 administrative unit in planning for implementation.

1 **Sec. 7. Effective date.** Those sections of this Act that amend the Maine Revised  
2 Statutes, Title 7, section 242, subsection 2 and Title 20-A, section 4706 take effect  
3 September 1, 2012.

4 **SUMMARY**

5 This bill is the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation  
6 and Forestry pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 660, section 18 and requires that  
7 agricultural studies be included in the system of learning results. The bill also provides  
8 that the Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council and the Department of Education  
9 develop a plan for instruction of agricultural studies to be included in the system of  
10 learning results and present the plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and  
11 Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and  
12 Forestry no later than January 15, 2010. The bill requires that the plan must include  
13 assistance to the Department of Education in helping school administrative units to  
14 implement instruction in agricultural concepts. The plan for assistance must be  
15 established by July 30, 2012 and implemented during the 2012-2013 school year.

16 The bill also allows a school administrative unit not to implement instruction of  
17 agricultural studies if implementation cannot be achieved within existing local resources.