

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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December 23, 2009
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124th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2010

Legislative Document

No. 1658

S.P. 623

In Senate, December 24, 2009

An Act To Increase Maine's High School Graduation Rates

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator ALFOND of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative SUTHERLAND of Chapman and
Senators: BARTLETT of Cumberland, President MITCHELL of Kennebec, PERRY of
Penobscot, Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, Speaker PINGREE of North Haven,
STRANG BURGESS of Cumberland.

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

2 Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 211, sub-c. 1-B is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 1-B**

4 **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE**

5 **§5031. High school graduation rate**

6 It is the goal of the State to achieve an average statewide secondary school graduation
7 rate of 90% by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The state board shall adopt rules
8 specifying the methodology to be used to calculate secondary school graduation rates
9 through 2016. Rules adopted under this section are major substantive rules pursuant to
10 Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A and must be provisionally adopted and submitted to
11 the Legislature for review no later than January 14, 2011.

12 **Sec. 2. Stakeholder group.** The Commissioner of Education and the State Board
13 of Education shall collaboratively establish a stakeholder group to develop
14 recommendations relating to increasing secondary school graduation rates in the State.
15 The stakeholder group must include, but is not limited to, members of local school
16 boards, secondary school principals and superintendents, secondary school teachers and
17 guidance counselors, school attendance coordinators and other persons the commissioner
18 and the board determine will contribute to the development of effective policies relating
19 to increasing secondary school graduation rates. The stakeholder group shall report its
20 recommendations to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
21 over education matters by January 10, 2011. The report must include, but is not limited
22 to, recommendations relating to:

- 23 1. The establishment of guidelines for school suspensions and expulsions;
- 24 2. The impact and implementation of zero-tolerance practices;
- 25 3. Determining best practices for secondary schools, families and youth for
26 increasing secondary school graduation rates; and
- 27 4. Raising the maximum age of mandatory school attendance from 17 to 18 years of
28 age.

29 **SUMMARY**

30 This bill establishes the state goal of achieving an average statewide secondary
31 school graduation rate of 90% by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The State Board
32 of Education is required to provisionally adopt major substantive rules specifying the
33 methodology to be used to calculate secondary school graduation rates through 2016 and
34 to submit those rules for legislative review by January 14, 2011.

1 The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of
2 Education to establish a stakeholder group to develop recommendations relating to
3 increasing secondary school graduation rates in the State and to report its findings to the
4 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by
5 January 10, 2011.