

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

Legislative Document

No. 1370

S.P. 502

In Senate, April 28, 2015

An Act To Improve the Quality of Teachers

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MILLETT of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative HUBBELL of Bar Harbor and
Senators: BAKER of Sagadahoc, BREEN of Cumberland, JOHNSON of Lincoln, KATZ of
Kennebec, Representatives: DAUGHTRY of Brunswick, KORNFIELD of Bangor, MAKER of
Calais, POULIOT of Augusta.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §13012, sub-§2-A**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 635, Pt. B,
3 §4, is further amended to read:

4 **2-A. Qualifications.** State board rules governing the qualifications for a provisional
5 teacher certificate must require that a certificate may only be issued to an applicant who
6 meets the requirements of subsection 2-B, has successfully completed a student teaching
7 practicum experience of at least one academic year in duration, which must have begun
8 during the applicant's sophomore year, and a student teaching experience of at least ~~15~~ 24
9 weeks during the applicant's senior year and:

10 A. For elementary school, has met academic and preprofessional requirements
11 established by the state board for teaching at the elementary school level and has
12 graduated with a grade point average of at least 3.0 based on a 4.0 grade point system
13 from an accredited, degree-granting educational institution upon completion of:

- 14 (1) A bachelor's degree from a 4-year accredited college or university;
15 (2) A 4-year program in liberal arts and sciences; or
16 (3) An approved 4-year teacher preparation program and has majored in the
17 subject area to be taught or an interdisciplinary program in liberal arts;

18 B. For secondary school, has met academic and preprofessional requirements
19 established by the state board for teaching at the secondary school level and has
20 graduated with a grade point average of at least 3.0 based on a 4.0 grade point system
21 from an accredited, degree-granting educational institution upon completion of:

- 22 (1) A bachelor's degree from a 4-year accredited college or university;
23 (2) A 4-year program in liberal arts and sciences; or
24 (3) An approved 4-year teacher preparation program and has majored in the
25 subject area to be taught;

26 C. Is otherwise qualified by having met separate educational criteria for specialized
27 teaching areas, including, but not limited to, special education, home economics,
28 agriculture, career and technical education, art, music, business education, physical
29 education and industrial arts, as established by the state board for teaching in these
30 specialized areas; or

31 D. Has completed 6 credit hours of approved study within 5 years prior to
32 application, has met entry-level standards and has held either a professional teacher
33 certificate that expired more than 5 years prior to the application date or a provisional
34 teacher certificate issued prior to July 1, 1988 that expired more than 5 years prior to
35 the application date.

36 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §13015, sub-§3, ¶¶C and D**, as enacted by PL 1983, c.
37 845, §4, are amended to read:

38 C. A description of the duties of the master teacher responsible for the design and
39 coordination of a teacher action plan; ~~and~~

1 D. A description of any current or planned linkages the support system has or will
2 have with institutions of higher education, department personnel and members of the
3 public in the operation of its support system; and

4 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §13015, sub-§3, ¶E** is enacted to read:

5 E. For provisional teachers during each year of their probationary period:

6 (1) Observations of classroom instruction of a minimum of 4 classes; and

7 (2) Formative feedback and continuous improvement conversations throughout
8 the school year.

9 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §13016, sub-§5** is enacted to read:

10 **5. Master's degree.** Notwithstanding subsections 1, 2 and 3, an individual who has
11 not completed a master's degree program and who is issued a teacher certificate in
12 accordance with this chapter on or after July 1, 2015 may not renew the teacher certificate
13 or be issued another certificate under this section unless the individual completes a
14 master's degree program within 5 years of being employed as a teacher in the State.

15 **Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §13406**, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 635, §6, is repealed.

16 **Sec. 6. 20-A MRSA §13407** is enacted to read:

17 **§13407. Minimum salaries beginning in 2016-2017**

18 Each school administrative unit shall establish a minimum salary of \$40,000 for
19 certified teachers for the school year starting after June 30, 2016 and in each subsequent
20 school year. Each school administrative unit shall provide to the department on or before
21 October 1st the number of teachers eligible for incremental salary increases as defined in
22 section 15689, subsection 7-A, paragraph A.

23 **Sec. 7. 20-A MRSA §15689, sub-§7-A** is enacted to read:

24 **7-A. Adjustment for minimum teacher salary.** Beginning in fiscal year 2017-18
25 and in each subsequent fiscal year, the commissioner shall, in accordance with this
26 subsection, increase the state share of the total allocation to a qualifying school
27 administrative unit by an amount necessary to achieve the minimum salary for certified
28 teachers established in section 13407.

29 A. As used in this subsection, unless the context otherwise indicates, the term
30 "qualifying school administrative unit" means a school administrative unit that the
31 commissioner determines to have a locally established salary schedule with a
32 minimum teacher salary of less than \$40,000 in school year 2015-2016. As used in
33 this subsection, unless the context otherwise indicates, "incremental salary increases"
34 means the incremental increases in the salaries of teachers employed by a qualifying
35 school administrative unit in school year 2015-2016 necessary to meet the minimum
36 salary requirements of section 13407 in fiscal year 2016-17 and thereafter.

37 B. The commissioner shall allocate the funds appropriated by the Legislature in
38 fiscal year 2017-18 and each subsequent fiscal year in accordance with the following.

1 (1) The amount of increased funds provided to qualifying school administrative
2 units under this subsection must be the amount necessary to fund the incremental
3 salary increases.

4 (2) The number of teachers eligible for incremental salary increases in a
5 qualifying school administrative unit for a fiscal year must be based on the local
6 staff information supplied to the department pursuant to section 13407 in that
7 fiscal year.

8 (3) The increased funds provided under this subsection must be issued to the
9 qualifying school administrative units as an adjustment to the state school
10 subsidy for distribution to the teachers. Qualifying school administrative units
11 must use the payments provided under this subsection to provide salary
12 adjustments to those teachers eligible for incremental salary increases. The
13 department shall collect the necessary data to allow the funds to be included in
14 the qualifying school administrative unit's monthly subsidy payments beginning
15 no later than February 1st of each fiscal year.

16 C. The amounts required to meet the employer's share of teacher retirement costs
17 attributable to payments in fiscal year 2017-18 pursuant to Title 5, section 17154 and
18 each subsequent fiscal year under this subsection must be paid by the commissioner
19 to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System in the appropriate year. As used
20 in the paragraph, "teacher" has the same meaning as in Title 5, section 17001,
21 subsection 42.

22 **Sec. 8. 20-A MRS §15689-A, sub-§25** is enacted to read:

23 **25. Salary supplements for approved support systems for teacher certification.**
24 The commissioner shall pay the costs attributable to the involvement of classroom
25 teachers in the operation of a school administrative unit's support system approved in
26 accordance with the provisions of section 13015. The amount of the payments must be
27 equal to the classroom teacher's per diem salary rate multiplied by the number of days the
28 classroom teacher is involved in the operation of an approved support system.

29 **Sec. 9. Qualifying scores for initial teacher certification.** No later than July
30 1, 2016, the Department of Education shall increase the qualifying scores for the
31 standardized qualifying examinations for applicants for initial teacher certification as set
32 forth in its Rule Chapter 13: Qualifying Examinations for Teachers, Educational
33 Specialists and Administrators to bring them into closer accord with the qualifying scores
34 for the standardized qualifying examinations for initial teacher certification established by
35 other states.

36 **Sec. 10. Costs.** The Department of Education shall determine the amount of state
37 funds necessary to meet the requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A,
38 section 15689, subsection 7-A and shall report that amount to the Joint Standing
39 Committee on Education no later than December 15, 2015. The committee shall report
40 out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature to provide the necessary
41 funding.

1 7. It provides additional appropriations for the Educators for Maine Program within
2 the Finance Authority of Maine in order to double the annual investment of state loan
3 funds awarded to eligible students.