

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1642

H.P. 1052

House of Representatives, April 12, 2023

An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative OSHER of Orono.
Cosponsored by Senator ROTUNDO of Androscoggin and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe,
FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth, Speaker TALBOT ROSS
of Portland, Senators: BENNETT of Oxford, President JACKSON of Aroostook, RAFFERTY
of York.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-G, sub-§9-B** is enacted to read:

3 **9-B.**

4 Education Wabanaki Studies Commission Legislative Per 20-A MRSA
5 Diem and Expenses Only §13

6
7 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §13** is enacted to read:

8 **§13. Wabanaki Studies Commission**

9 The Wabanaki Studies Commission, referred to in this section as "the commission," is
10 established to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in education curricula as required
11 by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4706, subsection 4.

12 **1. Membership.** The commission consists of the following 19 members:

13 A. Two members appointed by the Chief of the Penobscot Nation;

14 B. Two members appointed by the Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians;

15 C. Two members appointed by the Chief of the Mi'kmaq Nation;

16 D. Two members appointed by the Chief of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik;

17 E. Two members appointed by the Chief of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at
18 Motahkomikuk;

19 F. One member appointed by the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission;

20 G. Seven members appointed by the Commissioner of Education, including an
21 elementary school teacher; a middle school teacher; a high school teacher; a curriculum
22 director; a superintendent or principal; and an employee of a nationally accredited or
23 state-approved teacher education program, after consultation with deans, directors and
24 chairs of those programs; and

25 H. One member appointed by the Chancellor of the University of Maine System.

26 **2. Terms; vacancies.** The terms of office of commission members are as follows.

27 A. All members are appointed for 3-year terms.

28 B. Members shall serve until their successors are appointed and take office.

29 C. Vacancies must be filled in the same manner as original appointments, except that
30 any person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired
31 term of the vacancy.

32 **3. Compensation.** The members of the commission are entitled to receive legislative
33 per diem plus compensation for travel costs associated with participation in commission
34 meetings and other activities of the commission.

35 **4. Duties.** The commission shall:

36 A. Assist school administrative units and educators in the exploration of a wide range
37 of educational materials and resources relating to Wabanaki studies;

38 B. Identify materials and resources for implementing Wabanaki studies;

1 C. Involve other knowledgeable organizations and individuals able and willing to
2 assist with this work, including, but not limited to, museums and educators; and

3 D. Make recommendations to the department regarding:

4 (1) Wabanaki studies curricula;

5 (2) Funding Wabanaki studies in regional school units;

6 (3) Wabanaki studies courses that count toward teacher certification; and

7 (4) Implementation of teacher education programs and summer teacher institutes.

8 **5. Reporting.** The commission shall annually report its findings to the Commissioner
9 of Education for implementation and shall provide a copy to the Maine Indian Tribal-State
10 Commission, regarding:

11 A. Educational materials that are appropriate to assist school administrative units and
12 educators in the State to include Wabanaki studies as required by the Maine Revised
13 Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4706, subsection 4; and

14 B. Opportunities for professional development, training and technical assistance that
15 must be provided to assist school administrative units and educators in the State in
16 implementing Wabanaki studies as required by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-
17 A, section 4706, subsection 4.

18 **6. Staff assistance and resources.** The Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission shall
19 provide staffing assistance to the commission. Each entity appointing members to the
20 commission shall assist in identifying and securing resources to enhance the work of the
21 commission.

22 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §4706**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 247, §1 and affected by §3,
23 is further amended by amending the section headnote to read:

24 **§4706. Instruction in American history, African American studies, Maine studies,**
25 **~~Maine Native American history~~ Wabanaki studies and the history of genocide**

26 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §4706, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 247, §1 and
27 affected by §3, is further amended to read:

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

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

37 ~~B. Maine Native American cultural systems and the experience of Maine tribal people~~
38 ~~throughout history;~~

39 ~~C. Maine Native American territories; and~~

40 ~~D. Maine Native American economic systems.~~

1 this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined
2 in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

3 **Sec. 8. PL 2001, c. 403, §4** is repealed.

4 **Sec. 9. Convening the Wabanaki Studies Commission.** No later than 30 days
5 following the effective date of this Act, the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission shall
6 call and convene the first meeting of the Wabanaki Studies Commission established in the
7 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 13 and preside over the selection of a chair.

8 **Sec. 10. Staggered terms.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A,
9 section 13, subsection 2, at the initial meeting of the Wabanaki Studies Commission
10 members shall draw lots to determine members' initial term lengths so that the initial terms
11 of 7 members expire after one year, the initial terms of 6 members expire after 2 years and
12 the initial terms of 6 members expire after 3 years.

13 **Sec. 11. Implementation of Wabanaki studies required.** School administrative
14 districts shall implement Wabanaki studies in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes,
15 Title 20-A, section 4706, subsection 4.

16 SUMMARY

17 This bill establishes the Wabanaki Studies Commission to ensure the inclusion of
18 Wabanaki studies in education curricula. It amends the statutes relating to required courses
19 about Wabanaki studies, including amending provisions relating to the substance of the
20 courses and the requirement that the courses be funded. It directs the Department of
21 Education to establish and fund teacher education programs in Wabanaki studies. It directs
22 the State Board of Education to adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies
23 component in the qualifications for certifying teachers.