

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND ELEVEN

H.P. 311 - L.D. 385

An Act To Amend the School Administrative Unit Consolidation Laws

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1461, sub-§3, ¶C, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 580, §4, is amended to read:

C. Notwithstanding paragraph B, subparagraph (1), the commissioner may approve:

(1) A regional school unit to serve fewer than 1,200 students but not less than 1,000 students in an isolated rural community, including, for purposes of this paragraph, students attending from the unorganized territory, if the proposed regional school unit meets at least one of the following criteria:

(a) The proposed regional school unit comprises 3 or more school administrative units in existence prior to July 1, 2008;

(b) The member municipalities of the proposed regional school unit are surrounded by approved regional school units or alternative organizational structures and there are no other school administrative units available to join the proposed regional school unit; or

(c) The member municipalities of the proposed regional school unit include 2 or more isolated small schools that are eligible for an isolated small school adjustment pursuant to section 15683, subsection 1, paragraph F; and

(2) The formation of a regional school unit if the governing body or bodies of the proposed regional school unit demonstrate, in the notice of intent under subsection 1, that all reasonable and practical means of satisfying the requirements of subparagraph (1) and paragraph B, subparagraph (1) have been exhausted, and that approval is warranted based on the unique or particular circumstances of the unit or units.

In considering a request under this paragraph, the commissioner's decision must be based on, but is not limited to, the specific facts presented in the notice of intent and is applicable only to the specific school administrative units the decision concerns. ~~If the commissioner denies approval of a regional school unit under this paragraph, the commissioner's decision constitutes final agency action and is not subject to appeal to the state board.~~

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §1461-B, sub-§6, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 580, §5, is repealed.

Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §1461-B, sub-§6, ¶B, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 580, §5, is repealed.

Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §1461-B, sub-§6, ¶C, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 580, §5, is repealed.

Sec. 5. 20-A MRSA §1465, sub-§3, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13, is amended to read:

3. Referendum for a school administrative unit to join an existing regional school unit. The municipal officers of each municipality in a proposed reorganized school administrative unit shall place a warrant article substantially as follows on the ballot of a municipal referendum in accordance with the referendum procedures applicable to the school administrative unit of which the municipality is a member.

"Article: Do you favor approving the school reorganization plan prepared by the (insert name) Reorganization Planning Committee for school administrative unit (insert name of affected school administrative unit) to join the regional school unit (name of regional school unit), with an effective date of (insert date)?"

Yes No"

~~The following statement must accompany the article:~~

~~"Explanation:~~

~~A "YES" vote means that you approve of the (municipality or school administrative unit) joining the proposed regional school unit. The financial penalties under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15696 to the existing school administrative unit will no longer apply to the proposed regional school unit."~~

Sec. 6. 20-A MRSA §1465, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13, is amended to read:

4. Referendum on the admission of an additional school administrative unit to an existing regional school unit. If the vote to join a regional school unit under subsection 3 was in the affirmative, the existing regional school unit shall call a regional school unit referendum to vote on the following article.

"Article: Do you favor approving the school reorganization plan prepared by the (insert name) Reorganization Planning Committee for school administrative unit (insert name of affected school administrative unit) to join the regional school unit (name of regional school unit), with an effective date of (insert date)?"

Yes No"

~~The following statement must accompany the article:~~

~~"Explanation:~~

~~A "YES" vote means that you approve of the (municipality or school administrative unit) joining the proposed regional school unit. The financial penalties under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15696 to the existing school administrative unit will no longer apply to the proposed regional school unit."~~

Sec. 7. 20-A MRSA §1466, sub-§20, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 580, §9, is repealed.

Sec. 8. 20-A MRSA §15696, as amended by PL 2009, c. 455, §1, is repealed.

Sec. 9. PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §36, sub-§11, as amended by PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. VVV, §1, is further amended to read:

11. Result of disapproval at January 2008 referendum or subsequent referendum on or before January 30, 2009. A school administrative unit that rejects a proposed reorganization plan at the January 15, 2008 referendum or at a subsequent referendum on or before January 30, 2009 may restart the process to form a regional school unit with the same or other school administrative units and may seek assistance from the Department of Education to prepare another reorganization plan.

A. Subsequent reorganization plans must meet the same requirements as for reorganization plans filed prior to the January 2008 referendum, except that the timelines are adjusted to reflect a July 1, 2009 reorganization date.

~~B. The penalties set forth in Title 20-A, section 15696 apply to any school administrative unit that fails to approve a reorganization plan on or before January 30, 2009 and to implement that plan by July 1, 2009, including those school administrative districts that are reformulated under subsection 12. These penalties do not apply to any school administrative unit that implements a reorganization plan by July 1, 2011 in accordance with subsection 11-A.~~

Sec. 10. PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §36, sub-§11-A, as amended by PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. VVV, §2, is further amended to read:

11-A. Result for school administrative unit that approves plan at referendum on or before January 30, 2010 but is unable to implement plan. A school administrative unit that approves a proposed reorganization plan at the January 15, 2008 referendum or at a subsequent referendum on or before January 30, 2010 but is unable to implement the plan because the plan was rejected at referendum by one or more of its proposed partner school administrative units under the plan may restart the process to form a regional school unit with the same or other school administrative units and may seek assistance from the Department of Education to prepare another reorganization plan.

A. Subsequent reorganization plans must meet the same requirements as for reorganization plans filed prior to the January 2008 referendum, except that the timelines are adjusted to reflect a July 1, 2011 reorganization date.

~~B. The penalties set forth in Title 20-A, section 15696 apply, as of July 1, 2011, to any school administrative unit that fails to approve a reorganization plan on or before January 30, 2011 and to implement that plan by July 1, 2011.~~

Sec. 11. PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §44 is repealed.

Sec. 12. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2012.

In House of Representatives, 2011

Read twice and passed to be enacted.

..... Speaker

In Senate, 2011

Read twice and passed to be enacted.

..... President

Approved 2011

..... Governor