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Resolve, To Promote Alternative Schools within Existing School Systems

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the Alternative Education Programs Committee is created to review and make recommendations for the promotion of alternatives in education within existing school systems; and

Whereas, the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next legislative session; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Committee established. Resolved: That the Alternative Education Programs Committee, referred to in this resolve as "the committee," is established; and be it further

Sec. 2 Committee membership. Resolved: That the committee consists of 13 members appointed as follows:

1. Three members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
2. Four members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
3. One member from the University of Maine Institute for the Study of Students at Risk, appointed by the President of the Senate;
4. Two members from the alternative education advisory committee established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 5152, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
5. One member from the Department of Education, Office of Truancy, Dropout and Alternative Education, appointed by the President of the Senate;
6. One member from the Alternative Education Association of Maine, appointed by the Speaker of the House; and
7. One member from the Committee on Transition, appointed by the President of the Senate; and be it further

Sec. 3 Chairs. Resolved: That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair of the committee and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the committee; and be it further

Sec. 4 Appointments; convening of committee. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the committee; and be it further

Sec. 5 Duties. Resolved: That the committee shall conduct a review of all existing alternative education programs and how they are beneficial to youth at risk in Maine.

1. The committee shall:

A. Determine the number and types of kindergarten to grade 12 alternative education programs existing in the State;

B. Determine the number of students participating in alternative education programs;

C. Study the population served by the alternative education programs;

D. Review the practices that exist for at-risk youth and youth needing alternatives in education;

E. Determine how the alternative education programs help in raising graduation rates and lowering dropout rates;

F. Provide the percentage of youth who were identified as being at risk but completed high school through participation in an alternative education program;

G. Research local, state and federal funding sources;

H. Check how alternative education programs contribute toward helping students be college, work and citizenship ready;

I. Coordinate alternative education programs with extended learning opportunities such as 21st-century learning centers, advance placement and employment opportunities;

J. Identify the geographic regions in which students do not have access to alternative education programs;

K. Provide anecdotal data regarding the impact of alternative education on the lives of students and their parents; and

L. Seek professional development opportunities for staff and administration on meeting the needs of at-risk youth.

2. The committee may hold informational sessions and discussions with experts and interested parties; and be it further

Sec. 6 Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the committee; and be it further

Sec. 7 Compensation. Resolved: That the legislative members of the committee are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses related to their attendance at authorized meetings of the committee. Public members not otherwise compensated by their employers or other entities that

they represent are entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses and, upon a demonstration of financial hardship, a per diem equal to the legislative per diem for their attendance at authorized meetings of the committee; and be it further

Sec. 8 Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 19, 2007, the committee shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. The committee is authorized to introduce legislation related to its report to the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature at the time of submission of its report; and be it further

Sec. 9 Extension. Resolved: That, if the committee requires a limited extension of time to complete its study and make its report, it may apply to the Legislative Council, which may grant an extension; and be it further

Sec. 10 Committee budget. Resolved: That the chairs of the committee, with assistance from the committee staff, shall administer the committee's budget. Within 10 days after its first meeting, the committee shall present a work plan and proposed budget to the Legislative Council for its approval. The committee may not incur expenses that would result in the committee's exceeding its approved budget. Upon request from the committee, the Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall promptly provide the committee chairs and staff with a status report on the committee budget, expenditures incurred and paid and available funds.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Alternative Education Programs Committee. The committee shall review and make recommendations for the promotion of alternatives in education within existing school systems.