



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1300

H.P. 825

House of Representatives, March 23, 2023

**An Act to Give the Governing Board of a Municipality Input into
the Budget Developed by a School Board**

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 CAMPBELL of Orrington.
Cosponsored by Senator LYFORD of Penobscot and
Representatives: NUTTING of Oakland, SAMPSON of Alfred, THORNE of Carmel.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1485, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX,
3 §13, is amended to read:

4 **3. Budget approval.** A regional school unit's cost center summary budget must be
5 approved at a regional school unit budget meeting, at a municipal approval meeting
6 specified in section 15693, subsection 9 and by a budget validation referendum as provided
7 in section 1486.

8 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §1486, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 171, §3, is further
9 amended to read:

10 **1. Budget validation.** Following development of the annual regional school unit
11 budget and approval at a regional school unit budget meeting and a municipal approval
12 meeting as provided in section 1485, a referendum must be held in the regional school unit
13 as provided in this section to allow the voters to validate or reject the total budget adopted
14 at the regional school unit budget meeting and municipal approval meeting.

15 Every 3 years, the voters in a regional school unit shall consider continued use of the budget
16 validation referendum process. The warrant at the budget validation referendum in the 3rd
17 year following adoption or continuation of the referendum process must include an article
18 by which the voters of the school administrative unit may indicate whether they wish to
19 continue the process for another 3 years. The warrant for the referendum to validate the
20 fiscal year 2010-11 budget is deemed the 3rd-year warrant. A vote to continue retains the
21 process for 3 additional years. A vote to discontinue the process ends its use beginning
22 with the following budget year and prohibits its reconsideration for at least 3 years.

23 An article to consider reinstatement of the budget validation referendum process may be
24 placed on a warrant for a referendum vote by either a majority vote of the regional school
25 unit board or a written petition filed with the regional school unit board by at least 10% of
26 the number of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities in the
27 school administrative unit. The regional school unit board shall place the article on the
28 next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the regional school
29 unit board. If adopted by the voters, the budget validation referendum process takes effect
30 beginning in the next budget year or the following budget year if the adoption occurs less
31 than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once approved by the voters, the
32 budget validation referendum process may not be changed for 3 years.

33 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §15693, sub-§9** is enacted to read:

34 **9. Approval of budget by municipality.** Notwithstanding any municipal charter
35 provision, ordinance or other law to the contrary, the school budget of a school
36 administrative district, community school district or regional school unit must be approved
37 in accordance with this subsection prior to being submitted to a budget validation
38 referendum under section 1486. Following the approval of a budget at a regional school
39 unit meeting in accordance with section 1485, subsection 3, the school board shall call a
40 joint meeting with the municipal officers of each member municipality to review and vote
41 on the proposed budget. The municipal officers may propose amendments to the proposed
42 budget. A school budget must be approved by a majority vote of all members of the school
43 board and municipal officers present and voting at the joint meeting.

SUMMARY

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This bill provides that a school budget must be jointly approved by the municipal officers of each municipality that is a part of that school district prior to being submitted to the voters for approval.