



# 131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

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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**

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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      §13  
6 Expenses Only

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.