

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Amend the bill in section 1 by striking out all of subsection 3-A and inserting the following:

3-A. Application to commission. The commission may not accept an application for a public charter school unless the following requirements are met by the organizers of the proposed public charter school. The organizers shall:

A. Hold one or more public hearings in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school and at each public hearing present the organizers' proposed plan for the public charter school to persons attending the public hearing;

B. Send an invitation to each public hearing held under paragraph A to the local school board members of each of the school administrative units located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school;

C. Provide the persons who attend a public hearing with the best estimates possible related to the impact of the proposed plan on funding, student enrollment, courses and teachers in both the noncharter public schools and the proposed public charter school;

D. Announce to the persons who attend a public hearing that they have the right to provide the commission with their opinions and concerns about the proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the catchment area in which they reside;

E. Accept public comment from the persons who attend a public hearing regarding their opinions and concerns about the proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the catchment area in which they reside;

F. Invite written feedback from the local school boards located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school, including the results of a nonbinding advisory vote held by a local school board to determine the position of the local school board members on the following question: "Do you favor the organizers' proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the region in which you reside?"; and

G. Provide the commission with an objective summary of the public comments presented at each public hearing, the discussions that occurred between the organizers and the persons who attended the public hearings, the feedback from the local school boards located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school and the result of the nonbinding advisory votes held in accordance with paragraph F.'

Amend the bill by striking out all of section 2.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, amends the bill to provide that any person, group or organization, prior to filing an application for a public charter school with the Maine Charter School Commission, must hold at least one public hearing in the region that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school. The amendment strikes the provision in the bill that would have required organizers to hold a vote to determine if the persons who attend a public hearing are in favor of the organizers' proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the region. In addition to the remaining public hearing requirements included in the bill that must be met by organizers before the commission may accept the organizers' applications, the organizers must also meet the following requirements:

1. Send an invitation to each public hearing held by the organizers to the school board members of each of the school administrative units located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school;

2. Invite written feedback from the local school boards located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school, including the results of a nonbinding advisory vote held by the local school board on the question of whether the local school board members favor the organizers' proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the region; and

3. Provide the commission with an objective summary of the public comments presented at each public hearing, the discussions that occurred between the organizers and the persons who attended the public hearings, the feedback from the local school boards located in the catchment area that would be affected by the operation of the public charter school and the result of the nonbinding advisory votes held by local school boards located in the catchment area to determine if the local school board members are in favor of the organizers' proposed plan to operate a public charter school in the region.

The amendment also strikes the provision in the bill that requires the Commissioner of Education to review the current funding laws and rules for public charter schools and to submit proposed legislation that provides options for funding public charter schools.