

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

Date: April 20, 2021
To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.
From: Samuel Senft, Legislative Analyst

LD 1207 “An Act To Maintain the Current Level of Education Funding” (Rafferty)

SUMMARY

This bill provides that for the 2021-22 fiscal year, if a school administrative unit's student enrollment has declined from the previous allocation year, the commissioner is required to use the pupil count from the previous allocation year for the determination of operating costs.

TESTIMONY

<p>Proponents: Stephen Bailey, MSBA, MSSA; Dr. Holly Couturier, MPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A drop in enrollment doesn't mean you can have less staff or provide fewer course offerings• Many school experienced drop in enrollment due to pandemic.
<p>Opponents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• none
<p>Neither For Nor Against</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• none
<p>Information Only: Joanne Allen, DOE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intent is to buffer negative consequences of the pandemic on enrollment, which drives subsidy allocation.• Rather than using the average of the October 2020 and October 2019 subsidy counts, the bill proposes the usage of the average of the October 2019 and October 2018 subsidy counts for any district that had a decline in enrollment from October 2019 to October 2020.• Department proposed one-year revision to the teacher salary matrix for grades 1-5, adjusted the student to teacher ratio from 17:1 to 16:1. The adjustment helped boost the per pupil rate to offset the decline in pupils and avoid impacting the mill rate.• This approach was reflected in the 279s released on Jan 25, 2021• LD 1207 would cost approximately \$24,000,000.00 in state funds, and \$16,000,000 in local funds which would raise the mill expectation (required local share) from the enacted 7.90 to 8.04.

INFORMATION REQUESTS:

- 1) It was asked if, given that the biennial budget and GPA have been finalized, there is any mechanism that DOE is aware of by which to “reimburse” district funds lost due to decrease enrollment?
- 2) It was asked if DOE has any information regarding geographic difference in decreased (or increased) enrollment secondary to the pandemic?

See bill analysis for LD 651

- 3) It was asked if DOE has district level enrollment data available, comparing enrollment prior to the pandemic and current enrollment?

See bill analysis for LD 651

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The bill can be found [here](#).
- The bill adds the following language to 20-A MRSA §15674, sub-§1, ¶C

C. Beginning in fiscal year 2018-19: 16 (1) The average of the pupil counts for October 1st of the 2 most recent calendar years prior to the year of funding, reported in accordance with section 6004, including the counts of students enrolled in an alternative education program made in accordance with section 5104-A, except that for the 2021-22 fiscal year, if a school administrative unit's student enrollment has declined from the previous allocation year, the pupil count from the previous allocation year must be used.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- The bill includes an emergency preamble
- See also the bill analysis for LD 651

FISCAL IMPACT: Not yet determined