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An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Reorganization of School Administrative Units

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1486, sub-§5 is enacted to read:

5. Exception. A regional school unit in which the school board has approved a budget that proposes to raise an amount that exceeds the maximum state and local spending target determined pursuant to section 15671-A, subsection 5 by less than 5% is exempt from the provisions of this section.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §2307, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §21, is amended to read:

§ 2307. School budgets; exceptions

Notwithstanding any other law, municipal school budgets developed after January 1, 2008 must follow the same school budget requirements as regional school units pursuant to chapter 103-A. Except as described in subsections 1 and 2, a municipal school unit is deemed to be a regional school unit solely for the purpose of developing a budget pursuant to chapter 103-A.

1. Municipal charter; exception. A municipal school unit in which the responsibility for the formation and approval of the school budget is vested in the municipal council or other municipal legislative body by municipal charter is exempt from the provisions of section 1486.

2. Additional exception. A municipal school unit in which the school committee has approved a budget that proposes to raise an amount that exceeds the maximum state and local spending target determined pursuant to section 15671-A, subsection 5 by less than 5% is exempt from the provisions of section 1486.

SUMMARY

This bill is introduced by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 47. The bill makes the following changes to the laws governing the formation of regional school units.

1. It provides an exemption for those regional school units in which the regional school unit board has approved a budget that proposes to spend less than 5% above the level of funding outlined in the essential programs and services funding model from the budget validation referendum process until the regional school unit board proposes a budget that meets or exceeds that funding level.

2. It provides an exemption for municipal school units from the budget validation referendum vote in cases in which the municipal charter defines roles and a process for developing and approving the school budget.

3. It provides an exemption for those municipal school units in which the school committee has approved a budget that proposes to spend less than 5% above the level of funding outlined in the essential programs and services funding model from the budget validation referendum process until the school committee proposes a budget that meets or exceeds that funding level.