

CHAPTER 103-A

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNITS

SUBCHAPTER 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§1451. Regional school units

It is declared the policy of the State to provide sufficient resources to support the reorganization of school administrative units into regional, state-approved units of school administration to provide: [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Opportunity. Equitable educational opportunity for all students to demonstrate achievement of the content standards of the State's system of learning results established in section 6209; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Programs. Rigorous academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209 and that prepare students for college, careers and citizenship; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Delivery. Uniformity in the delivery of academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Tax rates. A greater uniformity of tax rates for the support of schools; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Sustainability. The efficient use of limited resources in order to achieve long-term sustainability and predictability in the support of public schools; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Public funds. Effective use of the public funds expended for the support of public schools by means of:

A. The creation of cost-efficient organizational structures; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Administrative structures and efficiencies that permit the organized and regular delivery of uniform state-sponsored professional development programs to promote coherence and consistency in the understanding and application of the State's standards-based system for continuous improvement in student achievement; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

7. School choice. The preservation of opportunities for choice of schools; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

8. Services. The maximization of opportunities to deliver services that can more effectively be provided in larger districts than from within smaller units or individual schools. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

Regional school units shall provide kindergarten to grade 12 public education, in accordance with this Title, and shall develop and implement policies that address efficiencies in administration, educational programming and the sharing of community resources for the continuous improvement of

student achievement and the preparation of students for college, careers and citizenship. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1452. Application of general law; core functions of a regional school unit

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, schools operated by the regional school units established in accordance with this chapter are the official schools of the participating municipalities. The provisions of general law relating to public education apply to these schools. State funds for public schools must be paid directly to the treasurer of a regional school unit. The core functions for which a regional school unit is responsible include without limitation: [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (AMD).]

1. Employment of superintendent. Employment and discharge of a superintendent pursuant to section 1001, subsection 3 and chapter 101, subchapter 2; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

2. Performance of business functions. Administration of accounting, payroll, financial management, purchasing insurance and auditing; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

3. Special education administration. Administration of special education duties of school administrative units under chapter 303; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

4. Transportation. Administration of transportation; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

5. Core curriculum. Adoption of a core curriculum, standardized testing and assessments aligned with the system of learning results established in section 6209; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

6. Budget. Adoption of the regional school unit budget; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

7. Reporting. Reporting required by state or federal law or regulation; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

8. Employment. Functioning as the employer of all employees working within the regional school unit for collective bargaining purposes and for all other purposes, including but not limited to those contained in section 1464, in Title 26, chapter 9-A and in all state and federal laws regulating the rights and duties of employers and employees; [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

9. School calendar. Establishment of a common school calendar, subject to local variations permitted by the regional school unit board; and [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

10. Adoption of policies. Adoption of policies for all schools in the regional school unit pursuant to section 1001, subsection 1-A, except that the local school committee may adopt policies not in conflict with the regional school unit policies. [PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §3 (AMD).

§1453. Status of regional school unit

For purposes of the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 8, Subsection 3, a regional school unit is a school administrative district. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1454. Rules

The state board may adopt rules to carry out this chapter. Rules adopted under this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 2

FORMATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT

§1461. Formation of a regional school unit; reorganization planning and approval

The residents of 2 or more school administrative units may form a regional school unit that is a body politic and corporate pursuant to this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Notice of intent. Each school administrative unit shall file with the commissioner a notice of intent to engage in planning and negotiations with other school administrative units for the purpose of developing a reorganization plan to form a regional school unit under this chapter. The commissioner shall respond to each notice of intent providing information regarding the process and whether the intended action complies with the requirements of this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Reorganization planning committee. The school administrative units that intend to engage in planning and negotiation to create a regional school unit shall form a reorganization planning committee.

A. For each proposed regional school unit, the commissioner shall provide guidelines for the formation of a reorganization planning committee including representation from the school administrative units included in the notice of intent, member municipalities and members of the general public who are residents of the proposed regional school unit. The guidelines must include roles and responsibilities of the committee, timelines for submission of the plan, the format for reporting the reorganization plan and evaluation criteria for approval of the plan. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Reorganization planning committees shall hold one or more public meetings to gather input from community members and to determine the sentiment of the public. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Submission of plans. Each school administrative unit shall submit to the commissioner its proposed reorganization plan for consolidation into a regional school unit that meets the requirements of paragraphs A and B.

A. A reorganization plan must include:

- (1) The units of school administration to be included in the proposed reorganized regional school unit;

- (2) The size, composition and apportionment of the governing body;
- (3) The method of voting of the governing body;
- (4) The composition, powers and duties of any local school committees to be created;
- (5) The disposition of real and personal school property;
- (6) The disposition of existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase obligations if the parties elect not to use the provisions of section 1506 regarding the disposition of debt obligations;
- (7) The assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations;
- (8) The disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations, including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds and other funds appropriated for school purposes;
- (9) A transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year of the reorganized unit and interim personnel policies;
- (10) Documentation of the public meeting or public meetings held to prepare or review the reorganization plan;
- (11) An explanation of how units that approve the reorganization plan will proceed if one or more of the proposed members of the regional school unit fail to approve the plan;
- (12) An estimate of the cost savings to be achieved by the formation of a regional school unit and how these savings will be achieved; and
- (13) Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. In order for the plan to be approved by the commissioner, the governing bodies of school administrative units shall work within the following parameters.

- (1) The proposed regional school unit must serve not fewer than 2,500 students, including, for purposes of this paragraph, students attending from the unorganized territory, except where circumstances relating to the following factors justify an exception:
 - (a) Geography, including physical proximity and the size of the current school administrative unit;
 - (b) Demographics, including student enrollment trends and the composition and nature of communities in the regional school unit;
 - (c) Economics, including existing collaborations to be preserved or enhanced and opportunities to deliver commodities and services to be maximized;
 - (d) Transportation;
 - (e) Population density; or
 - (f) Other unique circumstances including the need to preserve existing or developing relationships, meet the needs of students, maximize educational opportunities for students and ensure equitable access to rigorous programs for all students.
- (2) The plan must provide comprehensive programming for all students from kindergarten to grade 12 and must include at least one publicly supported secondary school, except if the plan provides comprehensive programming:

- (a) For all students from grade 9 to grade 12 within the regional school unit, with programming for students from kindergarten to grade 8 provided by the separate school administrative units;
- (b) For all students from kindergarten to grade 8 within the regional school unit, with programming for students from grade 9 to grade 12 provided by either operating a school or contracting for school privileges pursuant to chapter 115; or
- (c) For all students in a grade configuration that meets the needs of the students from the municipalities that make up the regional school unit, with programming for all other students provided by either operating a school or contracting for school privileges pursuant to chapter 115.

(3) The plan must be consistent with the policies set forth in section 1451.

(4) The plan may not displace teachers or students or close any schools existing and operating during the school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512.

(5) The plan must address how the school administrative unit will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of the reorganized school administrative unit in the first year of operation during the school year immediately following reorganization for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program. [PL 2021, c. 537, §§1, 2 (AMD).]

C. [PL 2021, c. 537, §3 (RP).]
[PL 2021, c. 537, §§1-3 (AMD).]

4. Review and approval of plans. If the commissioner finds that a plan for reorganization meets the requirements of this chapter, the commissioner shall notify the municipalities and school administrative units, and they shall proceed with referendum.
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Referendum on reorganization plan. The municipal officers of each municipality in a proposed reorganized school administrative unit or alternative organizational structure shall place a warrant article substantially as follows on the ballot of a municipal referendum conducted in accordance with the referendum procedures applicable to the school administrative unit of which the municipality is a member.

"Article: Do you favor approving the school administrative reorganization plan prepared by the (insert name) Reorganization Planning Committee to reorganize (insert names of affected school administrative units) into a regional school unit or alternative organizational structure, with an effective date of (insert date)?

Yes No"

[PL 2007, c. 668, §4 (AMD).]

6. Results of referendum. Each school administrative unit shall report the results of the referendum to the department following the referendum election.

A. A reorganization plan is approved by a kindergarten to grade 12 school administrative district or kindergarten to grade 12 community school district if the majority of votes cast in the district is in favor of approval of the plan. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. A reorganization plan is approved by the member municipalities of a community school district that does not provide public education for the entire span of kindergarten to grade 12 if the majority of votes cast in the member municipalities is in favor of approval of the plan. Approval results in

all member municipalities joining the regional school unit for all purposes for kindergarten to grade 12. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. A municipal school unit, including a municipal school unit that is a member of a school union, approves a reorganization plan if the majority of the votes cast in that municipality is in favor of approval of the plan. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. If a reorganization plan is approved by all of the affected school administrative units, or by the school administrative units considered sufficient under the proposed units' reorganization plan, the commissioner shall file notice of approval of the unit with the state board. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

7. Certificate of organization. If a plan or revised plan for reorganization has been approved by the commissioner and approved by voters at the referendum, the state board shall issue a certificate of organization to the school administrative units that are reorganized into a regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

8. Retention of duties pending referendum. Until the approval of a proposed school administrative reorganization plan at a referendum under subsection 5, each participating school administrative unit retains all authority, duties and obligations of the public employer of the employees of the school administrative unit pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A, including but not limited to the authority and duty to negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement that will take effect on or after the operational date of the proposed regional school unit.

[PL 2009, c. 107, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 107, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 580, §§3, 4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF). PL 2021, c. 537, §§1-3 (AMD).

§1461-A. Transitional powers and duties of initial regional school unit board

As used in this section, unless the context indicates otherwise, "regional school unit board" means the initial regional school unit board elected pursuant to section 1472-A. From the time of election of the regional school unit board to July 1st of the regional school unit's first operational year, the regional school unit board shall establish interim rules of procedures and shall elect officers who shall serve until officers are elected at a meeting following the operational date of the regional school unit. The regional school unit board's powers and duties during this period are governed by this section. [PL 2007, c. 668, §5 (NEW).]

1. Selection of superintendent. The regional school unit board shall select a superintendent for the regional school unit in accordance with section 1051 to carry out the duties specified in section 1055. During the interim period, the salary, office and other expenses of the superintendent, as well as the costs of the regional school unit board, including insurance, must be allocated to the school administrative units by the cost-sharing formula established in accordance with section 1481-A and included in the reorganization plan for the regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §5 (NEW).]

2. Budget preparation and approval. The regional school unit board shall prepare the annual budget for the first operational year of the regional school unit in time for its presentation to and consideration by the regional school unit board in accordance with subchapter 4. Specific duties may be assigned to existing personnel with the approval of the employing school administrative unit. The regional school unit board shall complete the budget development process and recommend a budget for consideration by the legislative body responsible for final budget approval and the residents of the

regional school unit. The budget format, approval procedures and assessments for the regional school unit's first operational year budget must be in accordance with this chapter.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §5 (NEW).]

3. Authorization. The regional school unit board is authorized to take all other actions provided under state law to prepare the regional school unit to become operational on July 1st for the first operational year, including the authority to open and maintain accounts, to incur expenses to be allocated among the regional school unit's member school administrative units in accordance with the reorganization plan for the regional school unit and to file applications for school construction projects and revolving renovation fund loans and other available funding.

Prior to the operational date of the regional school unit, the regional school unit board shall take measures necessary to prepare to meet its obligations as a public employer on and after the operational date pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A, including but not limited to negotiating a successor collective bargaining agreement that will take effect on or after the operational date. Until the operational date of the regional school unit, each participating school administrative unit retains all other authority, duties and obligations of the public employer of the employees of the school administrative unit pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A.

[PL 2009, c. 107, §2 (AMD).]

4. Fiscal agent. The regional school unit board is authorized to expend start-up funds for the regional school unit. A school administrative unit within the regional school unit may serve as a fiscal agent and may expend any start-up funds on behalf of the new regional school unit prior to the regional school unit's operational date without calling for a special meeting of the local legislative body.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §5 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 107, §2 (AMD).

§1461-B. Alternative organizational structure

1. Notice of intent. A school administrative unit may file with the commissioner a notice of intent to engage in planning and negotiations with other school administrative units for the purpose of developing a reorganization plan to form an alternative organizational structure in accordance with this section.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

2. Organization; procedures and parameters. An alternative organizational structure must be organized in accordance with the procedures and parameters applicable to regional school units as set forth in section 1461.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

3. Submission, review and approval of plans for an alternative organizational structure. A school administrative unit may submit a reorganization plan to the commissioner to form an alternative organizational structure in order to comply with this chapter.

A. The commissioner may designate a school administrative unit as part of an alternative organizational structure if the commissioner finds that the proposed alternative organizational structure will result in:

- (1) Consolidation of system administration;
- (2) Consolidation of special education administration, transportation administration and administration of business functions, including accounting, reporting, payroll, financial management, purchasing insurance and auditing;
- (3) Adoption of a core curriculum and procedures for standardized testing and assessment aligned with the system of learning results established in section 6209;

- (4) Adoption of a plan for both consistent school policies and school calendars; and
- (5) Adoption of a plan for consistent collective bargaining agreements. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

B. A plan for an alternative organizational structure must include an interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115. The plan must include procedures for conducting a kindergarten to grade 12 budget approval pursuant to paragraph C. [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF).]

C. The budget procedures of member entities of an alternative organizational structure must conform to the format and referendum procedures set forth in sections 1485 and 1486 for regional school units. The budget of the alternative organizational structure must be approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities conducted in accordance with the procedures applicable to a regional school unit budget meeting except as provided in paragraph D. The budget of an alternative organizational structure is not subject to a separate budget validation referendum as described in section 1486. [PL 2011, c. 485, §1 (AMD).]

D. The governing body of an alternative organizational structure, by majority vote, may authorize a change in the alternative organizational structure budget approval procedures in paragraph C to require a budget approval by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure instead of a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure. The change in procedure must be authorized by a majority of the total number of voters of all of the member entities in the alternative organizational structure at the next regular election or at a special referendum election of the voters called for that purpose by a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure. The article to be voted on at the next regular or special election must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor changing the (name of alternative organizational structure) budget approval procedure from a meeting of the voters to a vote by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure?

Yes No"

If approved by the voters, the budget approval procedure changes to a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure at a budget meeting. This procedure must remain in effect for at least 3 budget years before the alternative organizational structure may return to the requirement that a budget be approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure.

An article to consider reinstatement of the budget approval procedure in which the budget is approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities may be placed on a warrant for referendum vote by either a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure or by a written petition to the governing body of the alternative organizational structure signed by a number of voters of member entities of the alternative organizational structure equal to at least 10% of the voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election in the member entities of the alternative organizational structure. The governing body of the alternative organizational structure shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure. The article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor changing the (name of alternative organizational structure) budget approval procedure from a vote by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure to a meeting of the voters?

Yes No"

If approved by a majority of the total number of voters of all of the member entities in the alternative organizational structure, the budget approval procedure changes to a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure beginning in the next budget year or the following budget year if the approval occurs less than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once approved by the voters, this procedure may not be changed for at least 3 budget years.

A referendum authorized by this section must be called and conducted in accordance with the procedures for calling and conducting a referendum in a regional school unit under section 1502, but not including subsection 2, and section 1503, except that the duties of the board of directors of the regional school unit must be performed by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure.

Upon the review and approval of the commissioner and the approval of the voters at a referendum, the commissioner may approve a plan to form an alternative organizational structure that meets the requirements set forth in this chapter.

[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF); PL 2015, c. 286, §1 (AMD).]

4. Recognition as discrete school administrative units for subsidy purposes. In fiscal year 2011-12 and subsequent fiscal years, the member entities of an alternative organizational structure are recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B, unless the member entities of the alternative organizational structure include in the reorganization plan under subsection 3 their decision to be recognized by the department as a single school administrative unit for purposes of chapter 606-B.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

5. Recognition as school administrative unit for subsidy purposes; change. This subsection governs the procedure to alter the recognition of a school administrative unit that is an alternative organizational structure for subsidy purposes.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of a reorganization plan under subsection 3 or interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115, the governing body of an alternative organizational structure that began operation on or before June 30, 2010 may vote to have its member entities recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B. Such a vote must be approved by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure and the commissioner prior to June 1st of the year prior to the allocation year. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

B. If the member entities of an alternative organizational structure that requested in their reorganization plan to be recognized as a single school administrative unit pursuant to subsection 4 vote to be recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B, such a change must be approved by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure and the commissioner prior to June 1st of the year prior to the allocation year. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

6. Withdrawal of a member entity. Notwithstanding chapter 103-A, subchapter 2, for an alternative organizational structure approved by the commissioner and approved by the voters, the withdrawal provisions for member entities that were adopted as part of the reorganization plan under subsection 3 and interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115 govern the withdrawal of a member entity.

A. [PL 2011, c. 251, §2 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

B. [PL 2011, c. 251, §3 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

C. [PL 2011, c. 251, §4 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

[PL 2011, c. 251, §§2-4 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 251, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 485, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF).

§1462. Transfer of property and assets

Upon the formation of a regional school unit pursuant to this subchapter, the transfer of school property and assets is governed by this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Board of directors. The directors of the board of each regional school unit established in this chapter shall determine what school property of the municipal school units in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit and of the school administrative units in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit is necessary to carry out the functions of the regional school unit and shall request in writing that the board of each such school administrative unit or the municipal officers transfer title of their school property and buildings to the regional school unit board of directors.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Transfer. The municipal officers and boards contacted pursuant to subsection 1 shall make the transfer of property and assets notwithstanding any other provision in the charter of the school administrative unit or municipality. After the operational date of a regional school unit, if a transfer of property by a prior regional school unit, school administrative district or community school district has not occurred in accordance with the reorganization plan, the regional school unit board may act as the successor to the school board of the prior regional school unit, school administrative district or community school district for purposes of transferring the title to the property by deed to the regional school unit or other transferee in accordance with the terms of the reorganization plan.

[PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. C, §1 (AMD).]

3. Financing assumed debts. A regional school unit shall assume the outstanding indebtedness of a school administrative unit in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit for school construction projects approved for subsidy under chapter 609 and pursuant to section 1506. If a regional school unit board of directors has assumed the outstanding indebtedness of a school administrative unit in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit, the directors of the regional school unit board may, notwithstanding any other statute or any provision of any trust agreement, use any sinking fund or other money set aside by the school administrative unit in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit to pay off the indebtedness for which the money was dedicated. A regional school unit board of directors is not required to assume the outstanding indebtedness of a school administrative unit in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit in its regional school unit for nonstate-funded projects pursuant to section 15905-A and pursuant to section 1481-A.

[PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §39 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. C, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §39 (AMD).

§1463. Operational date and transfer of authority

1. Operational date. A regional school unit board of directors becomes operational on the date set by the state board as provided in this chapter.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Transfer of governing authority. The regional school unit board of directors, on the date established pursuant to subsection 1, shall assume responsibility for the management and control of the

public schools and programs within the school administrative units in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit that are within the regional school unit. Those school administrative units in existence prior to the operational date of the new regional school unit on the date established in subsection 1 have no further responsibility for the operation or control of the public schools and programs within the school administrative unit except those pursuant to section 1481-A. [PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §40 (AMD).]

3. Transfer of school accounts. Notwithstanding section 15004 or any charter of a municipal school unit, school administrative district, community school district or regional school unit, the balance remaining in the school accounts of the former municipal school unit, school administrative district, community school district or regional school unit within the new regional school unit must be paid to the treasurer of the new regional school unit and verified through the annual audit process pursuant to chapter 221, subchapter 2. The balance from each of the former municipal school unit, school administrative district, community school district or regional school unit must be used to reduce that unit's or district's local contribution to the regional school unit. Payment may be made in equal monthly installments during the implementation year. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Transfer of teachers and employees. Except as limited by paragraph A, all teachers and school employees who are employed by a participating school administrative unit on the day prior to the date established pursuant to subsection 1 must be transferred to and employed by the regional school unit as of the date established pursuant to subsection 1. Except as limited by subsection 2, the regional school unit shall assume all of the legal obligations and duties that the participating school administrative units owed to their employees, including but not limited to those obligations and duties arising under federal law, state law, collective bargaining agreements and individual employment contracts. It is the intent of this chapter to neither decrease nor increase the rights and benefits of transferred employees or the employer. The regional school unit shall also maintain and honor any agreements, contracts or policies regarding the rights and benefits of retirees and former employees created by a participating school administrative unit that is dissolved as a result of its inclusion within a regional school unit.

A. Teachers or other employees whose employment terminates by application of law or contract or by action of a participating school administrative unit before the date in subsection 1 may not be transferred. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Teachers and other employees who are transferred to the regional school unit prior to the completion of the applicable probationary period for their position have the length of their probationary period calculated from the date of their most recent date of employment by the participating school administrative unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Superintendent contracts. The contracts between the superintendents and school administrative units within the regional school unit are transferred on the date established pursuant to subsection 1 to the regional school unit board of directors. The regional school unit board of directors shall determine the superintendents' duties within the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §40 (AMD).

§1464. Collective bargaining

1. Assumption of obligations, duties, liabilities and rights. On the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1, the regional school unit board of directors shall assume all of the obligations, duties, liabilities and rights of the participating school administrative units for all

purposes under Title 26, chapter 9-A. The regional school unit is considered a single employer. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the responsibilities of the regional school unit include:

- A. Continued recognition of all bargaining agents that represented any bargaining units of employees who were employed by a participating school administrative unit, pending completion of merger proceedings described in this section; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- B. Assumption and continued observance of all collective bargaining agreements between such bargaining agents and a participating school administrative unit, which agreements continue in effect for the remainder of their unexpired terms unless the bargaining agent and regional school unit mutually agree otherwise; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- C. Collective bargaining for an initial or successor collective bargaining agreement in any bargaining unit in which a collective bargaining agreement is not in effect on the operational date and for any interim agreement that may be required to align expiration dates in a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, as described in this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).] [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Structure of bargaining units. As early as possible after reorganization, all bargaining units must be structured on a regional school unit-wide basis. Bargaining units that existed in the participating school administrative units shall merge in accordance with the procedures and criteria in this section. Merger into regional school unit-wide bargaining units is not subject to approval or disapproval of employees.

- A. Merger into regional school unit-wide bargaining units must be completed according to the schedule contained in this section and, except as required by paragraph H, no later than the latest expiration date of any collective bargaining agreement that was in effect on the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 that covered any employees in the merged unit. [PL 2007, c. 566, §1 (AMD).]
- B. There must be one unit of teachers and, to the extent they are on the effective date of this section included in bargaining units, other certified professional employees, excluding principals and other administrators. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- C. Any additional bargaining units in a regional school unit must be structured as follows:
 - (1) In the initial establishment of such units, units must be structured primarily on the basis of the existing pattern of organization, maintaining the grouping of employee classifications into bargaining units that existed prior to the creation of the regional school unit and avoiding conflicts among different bargaining agents to the extent possible; and
 - (2) In the event of a dispute regarding the classifications to be included within a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the current bargaining agent or agents or the regional school unit may petition the Maine Labor Relations Board to determine the appropriate unit in accordance with this section and Title 26, section 966, subsections 1 and 2. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- D. When there is the same bargaining agent in all bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the units must be merged as of the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1, and the regional school unit shall recognize the bargaining agent as the representative of the merged unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- E. When all bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit are represented by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be merged as of the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1. The identity of the single affiliate that will be designated the bargaining agent for the merged unit must be

selected by the existing bargaining agents and the state labor organization. Upon completion of the merger and designation of the bargaining agent and notification by the state labor organization to the regional school unit, the regional school unit shall recognize the designated bargaining agent as the representative of employees in the merged unit. If necessary, the parties will then execute a written amendment to any collective bargaining agreement then in effect to change the name of the bargaining agent to reflect the merger.

Prior to the operational date of the regional school unit, the single affiliate that is designated as the bargaining agent for the merged unit shall take measures necessary to prepare to meet its obligations as the bargaining agent on and after the operational date pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A, including, but not limited to, the authority and duty to negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement that will take effect on or after the operational date. Until the operational date of the regional school unit, each existing bargaining agent retains all other authority, duties and obligations of the bargaining agent of the employees of the school administrative unit pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A. [PL 2009, c. 107, §3 (AMD).]

F. When there are bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit in which there are employees who are not represented by any bargaining agent and other employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be merged as of the operational date pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 as long as a majority of employees who compose the merged unit were represented by the bargaining agent prior to the merger. The procedures for merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph E must be followed if applicable. If prior to the merger a bargaining agent did not represent a majority of employees who compose the merged unit, a bargaining agent election must be conducted by the Maine Labor Relations Board pursuant to paragraph H, except that the petition for an election must be filed not more than 90 days prior to the expiration date of the agreement having the latest expiration date among the bargaining units that will be merged into the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit. [PL 2007, c. 566, §2 (AMD).]

G. When there are unexpired collective bargaining agreements with different expiration dates in the merged bargaining units described in paragraphs D, E and F, all contracts must be honored to their expiration dates unless mutually agreed to otherwise by the public employer and the bargaining agent. Collective bargaining agreements must be bargained on an interim basis in any merged bargaining unit so that all collective bargaining agreements expire on the same date. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

H. When bargaining units with different bargaining agents must be merged into a single regional school unit-wide bargaining unit pursuant to this section, the bargaining agent of the merged bargaining unit must be selected in accordance with Title 26, section 967 except as modified in this section.

- (1) A petition for an election to determine the bargaining agent must be filed with the Maine Labor Relations Board by any of the current bargaining agents or the regional school unit.
- (2) The petition must be filed not more than 90 days prior to the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1.
- (3) The election ballot may contain only the names of the bargaining agents of bargaining units that will be merged into the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit and the choice of "no representative," but no other choices. No showing of interest is required from any such bargaining agent other than its current status as representative.
- (4) The obligation to bargain with existing bargaining agents continues from the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 until the determination of the bargaining

agent of the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit under this section; but in no event may any collective bargaining agreement that is executed after the operational date extend beyond the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit.

(5) The Maine Labor Relations Board shall expedite to the extent practicable all petitions for determination of the bargaining agent in the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit filed pursuant to this section.

(6) The bargaining units must be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as of the date of certification of the results of the election by the Maine Labor Relations Board or the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements in the unit, whichever occurs later.

(7) Until the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit, existing bargaining agents shall continue to represent the bargaining units that they represented on the day prior to the operational date of the regional school unit. If necessary, each bargaining agent and the regional school unit must negotiate an interim collective bargaining agreement to expire on the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit.

(8) When there are 2 or more bargaining units in which there are employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit with one or more other bargaining units pursuant to the election procedures described in this paragraph, the bargaining units that are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization must merge as of the operational date. The procedures for merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph E must be followed if applicable. [PL 2009, c. 580, §6 (AMD).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §6 (AMD).]

3. Agent to engage in collective bargaining. After the merger of bargaining units into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the bargaining agent of a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit and the regional school unit shall engage in collective bargaining for a collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit. In the collective bargaining agreement for each regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the employment relations, policies, practices, salary schedules, hours and working conditions throughout the regional school unit must be made uniform and consistent as soon as practicable.

In the event that the parties are unable to agree upon an initial regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement, the parties must use the dispute resolution procedures pursuant to Title 26, section 965 to resolve their differences.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Application of collective bargaining agreements. On or after the operational date of a regional school unit established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 but before the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3, the wages, hours and working conditions of an employee of the regional school unit who is in a bargaining unit and who is reassigned to a different position that is or, upon the completion of the merger of bargaining units, will be included in the same regional school unit-wide bargaining unit are determined by the terms of the existing collective bargaining agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned, except as provided in this subsection.

A. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement would cause a reduction in the employee's wage or salary rate, the employee's wage or salary rate must be maintained at the rate the employee was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of

negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3 or the applicable collective bargaining agreement or any interim successor agreement requires a higher wage or salary rate for the employee, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

B. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement would cause a reduction in the amount that is paid by the regional school unit for premiums for health insurance for the employee and the employee's dependents, the regional school unit's payment must be maintained at the amount that was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3 or the applicable collective bargaining agreement or any interim successor agreement requires a higher payment, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

C. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement provides for coverage under a different health insurance plan, the employee may elect to retain coverage under the health insurance plan in which the employee was enrolled immediately prior to reassignment if the eligibility provisions of the plan permit until the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

5. Bargaining units of employees of school unions. For purposes of section 1463, subsection 4 and this subsection, a school union that employed public employees, within the meaning of Title 26, section 962, subsection 6, who were represented by a bargaining agent on the day prior to the operational date of a regional school unit board of directors is considered to be a school administrative unit.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 566, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 107, §§3, 4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 580, §§6, 7 (AMD).

§1464-A. Collective bargaining in alternative organizational structures

1. Assumption of obligations, duties, liabilities and rights. On and after the operational date of an alternative organizational structure, teachers and other employees whose positions are transferred from a school administrative unit or school union to the alternative organizational structure and were included in a bargaining unit represented by a bargaining agent continue to be included in the same bargaining unit and represented by the same bargaining agent pending completion of the bargaining agent and bargaining unit merger procedures and bargaining for initial alternative organizational structure collective bargaining agreements covering alternative organizational structure employees, as described in this section. After employees become employees of the alternative organizational structure, the alternative organizational structure has the obligations, duties, liabilities and rights of a public employer pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A with respect to those employees.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

2. Structure of bargaining units. All bargaining units of alternative organizational structure employees must be structured on an alternative organizational structure-wide basis. Teachers and other school employees who are employed by the alternative organizational structure to provide consolidated services must be removed from the existing bargaining units of teachers and other employees who are employed by each member school unit and merged into units of alternative organizational structure employees. Merger into alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining units is not subject to approval or disapproval of employees. Formation of alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining units must occur in accordance with this subsection.

A. In each alternative organizational structure, there must be one unit of teachers if any teachers are employed by the alternative organizational structure, and, to the extent they are on the effective date of this paragraph included in bargaining units, other certified professional employees, excluding principals and other administrators. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

B. Any additional bargaining units in an alternative organizational structure must be structured as follows.

(1) In the initial establishment of such units, units must be structured primarily on the basis of the existing pattern of organization, maintaining the grouping of employee classifications into bargaining units that existed prior to the creation of the alternative organizational structure and avoiding conflicts among different bargaining agents to the extent possible.

(2) In the event of a dispute regarding the classifications to be included within an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit, the current bargaining agent or agents or the alternative organizational structure may petition the Maine Labor Relations Board to determine the appropriate unit in accordance with this section and Title 26, section 966, subsections 1 and 2. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

C. When there is the same bargaining agent in all bargaining units that will be merged into an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit, the units must be separated and merged on the operational date or the date represented employees are transferred to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is applicable, and the alternative organizational structure shall recognize the bargaining agent as the representative of the merged unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

D. When all bargaining units that will be separated and merged into an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit are represented by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be separated and merged on the operational date or the date represented employees are transferred to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is applicable. The identity of a single affiliate that will be designated the bargaining agent for the merged unit must be selected by the existing bargaining agents and the state labor organization. Upon completion of the merger and designation of the bargaining agent and notification by the state labor organization to the alternative organizational structure, the alternative organizational structure shall recognize the designated bargaining agent as the representative of employees in the merged unit. If necessary, the parties shall then execute a written amendment to any collective bargaining agreement then in effect to change the name of the bargaining agent to reflect the merger. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

E. When there are bargaining units that will be separated and merged into an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit in which there are employees who are not represented by any bargaining agent and other employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be separated and merged on the operational date or the date represented employees are transferred to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is applicable, as long as a majority of employees who compose the merged unit were represented by the bargaining agent prior to the merger. The procedures for separation and merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph D must be followed if applicable. If prior to the merger a bargaining agent did not represent a majority of employees who compose the merged unit, a bargaining agent election must be conducted by the Maine Labor Relations Board pursuant to paragraph F. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

F. When bargaining units with different bargaining agents must be merged into a single alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit pursuant to this section, the bargaining agent of the

merged bargaining unit must be selected in accordance with Title 26, section 967 except as modified in this section.

- (1) A petition for an election to determine the bargaining agent must be filed with the Maine Labor Relations Board by any of the current bargaining agents or the alternative organizational structure.
- (2) The petition must be filed not more than 90 days prior to the first August 31st occurring after either the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the alternative organizational structure or the date on which positions are transferred from member school units to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is later.
- (3) The election ballot may contain only the names of the bargaining agents of bargaining units that will be merged into the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit and the choice of "no representative," but no other choices. A showing of interest is not required from any such bargaining agent other than its current status as representative.
- (4) The obligation to bargain with existing bargaining agents continues from the operational date of the alternative organizational structure or the date on which positions are transferred from member school units to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is later, until the determination of the bargaining agent of the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit under this section; but in no event may any collective bargaining agreement that is executed after the operational date extend beyond the first August 31st occurring after either the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the alternative organizational structure or the date on which positions are transferred from member school units to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is later.
- (5) The Maine Labor Relations Board shall expedite to the extent practicable all petitions for determination of the bargaining agent in the alternative organizational structure filed pursuant to this section.
- (6) The bargaining units must be merged into an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit as of the date of certification of the results of the election by the Maine Labor Relations Board or the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements in the unit, whichever occurs later.
- (7) Until the first August 31st occurring after either the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the alternative organizational structure or the date on which positions are transferred from member school units to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is later, existing bargaining agents shall continue to represent the bargaining units that they represented on the day prior to the operational date of the alternative organizational structure. If necessary, each bargaining agent and the alternative organizational structure must negotiate interim collective bargaining agreements to expire the first August 31st occurring after either the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the alternative organizational structure or the date on which positions are transferred from member school units to the alternative organizational structure, whichever is later.
- (8) When there are 2 or more bargaining units in which there are employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization that will be merged into an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit with one or more other bargaining units pursuant to the election procedures described in this paragraph, the bargaining units that are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization must merge as of the operational date. The procedures for merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph D must be followed if applicable. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

3. Agent to engage in collective bargaining. After the merger of bargaining units in an alternative organizational structure, the bargaining agent of an alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit and the alternative organizational structure shall engage in collective bargaining for a collective bargaining agreement for the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit. In the collective bargaining agreement for each alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit, the employment relations, policies, practices, salary schedules, hours and working conditions throughout the alternative organizational structure must be made uniform and consistent as soon as practicable. In the event that the parties are unable to agree upon an initial alternative organizational structure-wide collective bargaining agreement, the parties must use the dispute resolution procedures pursuant to Title 26, section 965 to resolve their differences.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

4. Application of collective bargaining agreements. On and after the operational date of an alternative organizational structure, but before the completion of negotiations for a single alternative organizational structure-wide collective bargaining agreement for the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit, the wages, hours and working conditions of an employee of the alternative organizational structure who is in a bargaining unit and who is reassigned to a different position that is in a different bargaining unit but that upon the completion of the merger of bargaining units will be included in the same alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit must be determined by the terms of the collective bargaining agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned, except as provided in this subsection.

A. If the application of the collective bargaining agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned would cause a reduction in the employee's wage or salary rate, the employee's wage or salary rate must be maintained at the rate the employee was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of negotiations for a single alternative organizational structure-wide collective bargaining agreement for the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit or the applicable collective bargaining agreement requires a higher wage or salary rate for the employee, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

B. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned would cause a reduction in the amount that is paid by the alternative organizational structure for premiums for health insurance for the employee and the employee's dependents, the alternative organizational structure's payment must be maintained at the amount that was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of negotiations for a single alternative organizational structure-wide collective bargaining agreement for the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit or the applicable collective bargaining agreement requires a higher payment, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

C. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned provides for coverage under a different health insurance plan, the employee may elect to retain coverage under the health insurance plan in which the employee was enrolled immediately prior to reassignment if the eligibility provisions of the plan permit until the completion of negotiations for a single alternative organizational structure-wide collective bargaining agreement for the alternative organizational structure-wide bargaining unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §8 (NEW).

§1465. Addition of a school administrative unit to an existing regional school unit

A school administrative unit not originally a member of a regional school unit may be included in the regional school unit in accordance with this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Notice of intent. A school administrative unit shall file with the commissioner a notice of intent to engage in planning and negotiations to join with a regional school unit under this chapter. The commissioner shall respond to each notice of intent and provide information regarding the process and whether the intended action complies with the requirements of this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Process to join a regional school unit. A school administrative unit may join an existing regional school unit in the same manner required for the formation of a regional school unit under section 1461, except that section 1461, subsections 5, 6 and 7 do not apply. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Referendum for a school administrative unit to join an existing regional school unit. The municipal officers of each municipality that is a member of a school administrative unit that is proposing to join a regional school unit shall place a warrant article substantially as follows on the ballot of a municipal referendum in accordance with the referendum procedures applicable to the school administrative unit of which the municipality is a member.

"Article: Do you favor approving the school reorganization plan prepared by the (insert name) Reorganization Planning Committee for school administrative unit (insert name of affected school administrative unit) to join the regional school unit (name of regional school unit), with an effective date of (insert date)?

Yes No"

[PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. D, §6 (AMD).]

4. Referendum on the admission of an additional school administrative unit to an existing regional school unit. If the vote to join a regional school unit under subsection 3 was in the affirmative, the existing regional school unit shall conduct a regional school unit referendum to vote on the following article.

"Article: Do you favor approving the school reorganization plan prepared by the (insert name) Reorganization Planning Committee for school administrative unit (insert name of affected school administrative unit) to join the regional school unit (name of regional school unit), with an effective date of (insert date)?

Yes No"

[PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. D, §8 (AMD).]

5. Results of referendum. A school administrative unit shall report the results of the referendum to the department following the referendum election.

A. For a referendum conducted pursuant to subsection 3:

- (1) A reorganization plan is approved by a kindergarten to grade 12 school administrative district or kindergarten to grade 12 community school district if the majority of votes cast in the district is in favor of approval of the plan;
- (2) A reorganization plan is approved by a regional school unit if the majority of votes cast in the regional school unit is in favor of approval of the plan;
- (3) A reorganization plan is approved by the member municipalities of a community school district that does not provide public education for the entire span of kindergarten to grade 12 if the majority of votes cast in the member municipalities is in favor of approval of the plan. Approval results in all member municipalities joining the regional school unit for all purposes for kindergarten to grade 12; and

(4) A municipal school unit, including a municipal school unit that is a member of a school union, approves a reorganization plan if the majority of the votes cast in that municipality is in favor of approval of the plan. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. For a referendum conducted pursuant to subsection 4, a reorganization plan is approved by a regional school unit if the majority of votes cast in the regional school unit is in favor of approval of the plan. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

If a reorganization plan is approved by the affected school administrative unit, the commissioner shall file notice of approval of the unit with the state board.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Amended certificate of organization. If a plan for reorganization has been approved by the commissioner and approved by voters at the referendum under subsections 3 and 4, the commissioner shall issue an amended certificate of organization to the reorganized regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 251, §§5, 6 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. D, §§5-8 (AMD).

§1466. Withdrawal of a single municipality from a regional school unit

1. Petition. Beginning January 1, 2012, the residents of a municipality that has been a member of a regional school unit for at least 30 months may petition to withdraw from the regional school unit in accordance with this subsection.

A. Ten percent of the number of voters in the municipality who voted at the last gubernatorial election must sign the petition to withdraw from the regional school unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. At least 10 days before the special election called pursuant to this paragraph, the municipal officers of the municipality within the regional school unit shall hold a posted or otherwise advertised public hearing on the petition. The municipal officers shall call and hold a special election in the manner provided for the calling and holding of town meetings or city elections to vote on the withdrawal from the regional school unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

C. The petition to withdraw from the regional school unit must be approved by secret ballot by a majority vote of the voters present and voting before it may be presented to the regional school unit board and the commissioner. Voting in towns must be conducted in accordance with Title 30-A, sections 2528 and 2529, even if the towns have not accepted the provisions of Title 30-A, section 2528, and voting in cities must be conducted in accordance with Title 21-A. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

For the purposes of this subsection, the 30-month period after which a petition to withdraw may be considered in a member municipality of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12 is 30 months after the original operational date of the school administrative district; and the 30-month period after which a petition to withdraw may be considered in a member municipality of a school administrative district that did not reformulate as a regional school unit but that became a member entity of an alternative organizational structure is 30 months after the operational date of the alternative organizational structure.

[PL 2011, c. 328, §1 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 328, §2 (AFF).]

2. Form. Except as provided in subsection 2-A, the article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the board of directors of regional school unit (name of regional school unit) and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend \$ (insert amount) and authorizing the (municipal officers; i.e., selectpersons, town council, etc.) to issue notes in the name of the (name of the municipality) or otherwise pledge the credit of the (name of the municipality) in an amount not to exceed \$ (insert amount) for this purpose?

Yes No"

[PL 2019, c. 302, §1 (AMD).]

2-A. Form for withdrawal for a regional school unit composed of a single municipality. If the regional school unit is composed of a single municipality, the article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal from and dissolution of regional school unit (name of regional school unit) with the board of directors of regional school unit (name of regional school unit) and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend \$ (insert amount) and authorizing the (municipal officers; i.e., selectpersons, town council, etc.) to issue notes in the name of the (name of the municipality) or otherwise pledge the credit of the (name of the municipality) in an amount not to exceed \$ (insert amount) for this purpose?

Yes No"

[PL 2019, c. 302, §2 (NEW).]

3. Notice of vote. If residents of the municipality vote favorably on a petition for withdrawal, the clerk shall immediately give written notice, by registered mail, to the secretary of the regional school unit and the commissioner that must include:

A. The petition adopted by the voters, including the affirmative and negative votes cast; and [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. An explanation by the municipal officers, stating to the best of their knowledge the reason or reasons why the municipality seeks to withdraw from the regional school unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

4. Agreement for withdrawal; notice; changes in agreement; final agreement. The agreement for withdrawal must comply with this subsection.

A. The commissioner shall direct the municipal officers of the petitioning municipality to select representatives to a withdrawal committee as follows: one member from the municipal officers, one member from the general public and one member from the group filing the petition. The commissioner shall also direct the directors of the regional school unit board representing the petitioning municipality to select one member of the regional school unit board who represents that municipality to serve on the withdrawal committee. The municipal officer and the member of the regional school unit board serve on the withdrawal committee only so long as they hold their respective offices. Vacancies must be filled by the municipal officers and the regional school unit board. The chair of the regional school unit board shall call a meeting of the withdrawal committee within 30 days of the notice of the vote in subsection 3. The chair of the regional school unit board shall open the meeting by presiding over the election of a chair of the withdrawal committee. The responsibility for the preparation of the agreement rests with the withdrawal committee, subject to the approval of the commissioner. The withdrawal committee may draw upon the resources of the department for information not readily available at the local level and employ competent advisors within the fiscal limit authorized by the voters. The agreement must be submitted to the

commissioner within 90 days after the withdrawal committee is formed. Extensions of time may be granted by the commissioner upon the request of the withdrawal committee.

- (1) The agreement must contain provisions to provide educational services for all students of the petitioning municipality within the regional school unit. The agreement must provide that during the first year following the withdrawal students may attend the school they would have attended if the petitioning municipality had not withdrawn. The allowable tuition rate for students sent from one municipality to another in the former regional school unit must be determined under section 5805, subsection 1, except that it is not subject to the state per pupil average limitation in section 5805, subsection 2.
 - (2) The agreement must establish that the withdrawal takes effect at the end of the regional school unit's fiscal year.
 - (3) The agreement must establish that the withdrawal will not cause a need within 5 years from the effective date of withdrawal for school construction projects that would be eligible for state funds. This limitation does not apply when a need for school construction existed prior to the effective date of the withdrawal or when a need for school construction would have arisen even if the municipality had not withdrawn.
 - (4) The agreement must establish how transportation services will be provided.
 - (5) The agreement must provide for administration of the new administrative unit, which should not include the creation of new supervisory units if at all possible.
 - (6) The agreement must make provision for the distribution of financial commitments arising from outstanding bonds, notes and any other contractual obligations that extend beyond the proposed date of withdrawal.
 - (7) The agreement must provide appropriately for the distribution of any outstanding financial commitments to the superintendent of the regional school unit.
 - (8) The agreement must provide for the continuation and assignment of collective bargaining agreements as they apply to the new or reorganized regional school unit for the duration of those agreements and must provide for the continuation of representational rights.
 - (9) The agreement must provide for the continuation of continuing contract rights under section 13201.
 - (10) The agreement must provide for the disposition of all real and personal property and other monetary assets.
 - (11) The agreement must provide for the transition of administration and governance of the schools to properly elected governing bodies of the newly created administrative unit and must provide that the governing body may not be elected simultaneously with the vote on the article to withdraw unless the commissioner finds there are extenuating circumstances that necessitate simultaneous elections.
 - (12) The agreement must contain provisions to provide child nutrition services in compliance with state and federal laws at schools operated by the petitioning municipality.
 - (13) The agreement must include an anticipated budget for the petitioning municipality for the first year of operation of schools operated by the petitioning municipality. The budget must include an estimate of all revenues and expenditures in accordance with the cost center summary budget format pursuant to section 1485. [PL 2017, c. 385, §1 (AMD).]
- B. Within 60 days of the receipt of the agreement, the commissioner shall either give it conditional approval or recommend changes. The changes must be based upon the standards set forth in paragraph A and the commissioner's findings of whether the contents of the agreement will provide

for appropriate educational and related services to the students of the petitioning municipality and for the orderly transition of assets, governance and other matters related to the petitioning municipality and the regional school unit. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

C. If the commissioner gives conditional approval of the agreement, the commissioner shall notify the regional school unit board and the municipal officers by registered mail of the time and place of a public hearing at least 20 days prior to the date set for the hearing to discuss the merits of the proposed agreement of withdrawal. The chair of the regional school unit board shall conduct the hearing.

(1) The regional school unit board shall post a public notice in each municipality of the time and location of the hearing at least 10 days before the hearing.

(2) Within 30 days following the hearing under this paragraph, the withdrawal committee shall forward the final agreement to the commissioner. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

D. If the commissioner recommends changes to the agreement, the commissioner shall:

(1) Send the agreement back to the withdrawal committee for necessary corrections;

(2) Establish a maximum time within which to make the corrections; and

(3) Indicate that the corrected agreement must be returned to the commissioner for conditional approval before it goes to public hearing as set forth in paragraph C. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

[PL 2017, c. 385, §1 (AMD).]

5. Date of municipal election; notice; warrant; polling hours. The date and time for voting is as set forth in this subsection.

A. The commissioner shall determine the date upon which the voters of the petitioning municipality must vote upon the agreement submitted to them. The election must be held as soon as practicable, and the commissioner shall attempt to set the date of the vote to coincide with a statewide election. The commissioner shall set a date that allows determination of the vote no later than November 30th of the year prior to the intended July 1st effective operational date for the schools of the withdrawn municipality. [PL 2017, c. 385, §2 (AMD).]

B. At least 35 days before the date set in paragraph A, the commissioner shall give written notice of the date by registered or certified mail to the town clerk or city clerk of the municipality petitioning to withdraw. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

C. The town clerk or city clerk shall immediately notify the municipal officers upon receipt of the notice under paragraph B, and the municipal officers shall meet and immediately issue a warrant for a special town meeting or city election, as the case may be, to be held on the date designated by the commissioner. No other date may be used. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

D. In a warrant under paragraph C, the municipal officers shall direct that the polls are to be open by 10 a.m. and remain open until 8 p.m. [PL 2013, c. 167, Pt. A, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2017, c. 385, §2 (AMD).]

6. Public hearing; voting procedures. The following requirements apply to the voting procedures.

A. At least 10 days before the election, the municipal officers shall hold a posted or otherwise advertised public hearing on the withdrawal question. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the voting at the meeting held in a town must be conducted in accordance with Title 30-A, sections 2528 and 2529, even if the town has not accepted the provisions of Title 30-A, section 2528. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

C. The voting at the meeting held in a city must be conducted in accordance with Title 21-A. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

7. Article. Except as provided in subsection 7-A, the article to be voted on must be in the following form.

"Article: Do you favor the withdrawal of the (name of municipality) from the regional school unit (name of regional school unit) subject to the terms and conditions of the withdrawal agreement dated (insert date)?

Yes No"

[PL 2019, c. 302, §3 (AMD).]

7-A. Article for a regional school unit composed of a single municipality. If the regional school unit is composed of a single municipality, the article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor the withdrawal of the (name of municipality) from the regional school unit (name of regional school unit) and the dissolution of the regional school unit (name of regional school unit) subject to the terms and conditions of the withdrawal agreement dated (insert date)?

Yes No"

[PL 2019, c. 302, §4 (NEW).]

8. Ballots; posting of agreement. The withdrawal agreement need not be printed on the ballot. Copies of the agreement must be posted in the municipality in the same manner as specimen ballots are posted under Title 30-A, section 2528.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

9. Required vote. Before the municipality may withdraw from the regional school unit, the withdrawal agreement must be approved by a majority vote of those casting valid votes in the municipality, and the total number of votes cast for and against withdrawal at the municipal vote must equal or exceed 50% of the total number of votes cast in the municipality for Governor at the last gubernatorial election.

[PL 2013, c. 461, §1 (AMD).]

9-A. Required vote; exception for a municipality of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit. A 2/3 vote of those casting valid votes in the municipality is required before a municipality that is a member municipality of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12, as amended by Public Law 2007, chapter 668, section 48, may withdraw from the regional school unit.

[PL 2013, c. 461, §2 (AMD).]

9-B. Required vote.

[PL 2013, c. 461, §3 (RP).]

10. Restriction on withdrawal petitions. A municipality within a regional school unit may not petition for withdrawal within 2 years after the date of:

A. A municipal vote on a petition for withdrawal if the petition received less than 45% of the votes cast; or [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. A municipal vote on a withdrawal agreement if the agreement received less than 45% of the votes cast. [PL 2013, c. 461, §4 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 461, §4 (AMD).]

10-A. Restriction on withdrawal petitions for a municipality of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit. A municipality that is part of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12, as amended by Public Law 2007, chapter 668, section 48, may not petition for withdrawal within 2 years after the date of:

A. A municipal vote on a petition for withdrawal if the petition received less than 45% of the votes cast; or [PL 2013, c. 461, §5 (NEW).]

B. A municipal vote on a withdrawal agreement if the agreement received less than 60% of the votes cast. [PL 2013, c. 461, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 461, §5 (NEW).]

11. Cost of advisors. The expense of employing competent advisors by the municipality petitioning to withdraw must be borne by the municipality, and the expense of employing competent advisors by the regional school unit must be borne by the regional school unit with the municipality bearing its share according to the regional school unit's cost-sharing agreement.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

12. Determination of vote. The town clerk or city clerk shall, within 24 hours of determination of the result of the vote in the municipality, certify the total number of votes cast in the affirmative and the total number of votes cast in the negative on the article to the commissioner.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

13. Determination of results; execution of agreement. Except for a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12, as amended by Public Law 2007, chapter 668, section 48, if the commissioner finds that a majority of the voters voting on the article has voted in the affirmative and the total number of votes cast for and against the article equal or exceed 50% of the total number of votes cast in the municipality for Governor at the last gubernatorial election, the commissioner shall notify the municipal officers and the regional school unit board to take steps for the withdrawal in accordance with the terms of the agreement for withdrawal. For a municipality that is part of a school administrative district that was reformulated as a regional school unit pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12, as amended by Public Law 2007, chapter 668, section 48, if the commissioner finds that at least 2/3 of the votes validly cast in the municipality are in the affirmative, the commissioner shall notify the municipal officers and the regional school unit board to take steps for the withdrawal in accordance with the terms of the agreement for withdrawal.

[PL 2013, c. 461, §6 (AMD).]

13-A. Determination of results; execution of agreement; effective date.

[PL 2013, c. 461, §7 (RP).]

14. Recount; checklists and ballots; disputed ballots. This subsection applies to recounts, checklists, ballots and disputed ballots.

A. If, within 7 days of the computation and recording of the results of the voting, the municipality requests to the commissioner in writing a recount of the votes, the commissioner shall immediately cause the checklists and all the ballots cast in the municipality to be collected and kept at the commissioner's office so they may be recounted by the municipality. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. The town clerk or city clerk of the municipality is authorized to deliver the checklists and ballots to the commissioner, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

C. The commissioner shall resolve any question with regard to disputed ballots. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

15. Execution of agreement; certified record; certificate of withdrawal. When the agreement for withdrawal has been put into effect by the municipality, the municipal officers shall notify the commissioner by certified mail that the agreement of withdrawal has been executed. A complete certified record of the transaction involved in the withdrawal must be filed with the commissioner. The commissioner shall immediately issue a certificate of withdrawal to be sent by certified mail for filing with the regional school unit board and shall file a copy in the office of the Secretary of State.
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

16. Indebtedness. This subsection applies to outstanding indebtedness.

A. Whenever a municipality withdraws from a regional school unit having outstanding indebtedness, the regional school unit remains intact for the purpose of securing and retiring the indebtedness. The withdrawal agreement may provide for alternate means for retiring outstanding indebtedness. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

B. For the purposes of this subsection, "outstanding indebtedness" means bonds or notes issued or assumed by the regional school unit board and lease-purchase agreements issued or assumed by the regional school unit, but does not include any indebtedness of the withdrawing municipality assumed by the regional school unit at the time of formation. [PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

17. General purpose aid. When a municipality withdraws from a regional school unit, the general purpose aid for the municipality must be computed in accordance with chapter 606-B.
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

18. Committee recall. If the commissioner determines that the withdrawal committee has failed to comply with the requirements of this section, the commissioner may authorize the municipal officers to appoint new representatives to the withdrawal committee.
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

19. Transfer of property. The regional school unit board may negotiate with the withdrawal committee regarding an equitable division of the regional school unit's property between the regional school unit and the municipality represented by the withdrawal committee and transfer title of the property to the municipality following withdrawal. The regional school unit board shall determine that the regional school unit's educational program will not be disrupted solely because of the transfer of any given property before it may complete the transfer.
[PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW).]

20. Reorganization; penalties.
[PL 2011, c. 251, §7 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

21. Dissolution. Except as otherwise provided in this section, upon the withdrawal of a municipality from a regional school unit that is composed of a single municipality, the regional school unit is dissolved.
[PL 2019, c. 302, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §9 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 251, §7 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 328, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 328, §2 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 678, Pt. J, §§1-5 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 167, Pt. A, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 461, §§1-7 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 385, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 302, §§1-5 (AMD).

§1467. Transfer of a municipality from one regional school unit to another

1. Petition to commissioner. Two regional school unit boards may petition the commissioner by joint resolution to permit a municipality to transfer from one regional school unit to the other. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

2. Transfer agreement. The 2 regional school unit boards and the municipal officers of the municipality involved shall form a committee to prepare a transfer agreement within 60 days after being authorized by the commissioner to prepare the agreement. Extensions of time may be granted by the commissioner.

A. The committee shall consider the standards set forth in section 1466, subsection 4, paragraph A in preparing the agreement. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

B. The approval process for the agreement must follow the steps set forth in section 1466, subsections 4 to 17. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

C. The following article must appear on the ballot when the transfer of a municipality is considered under paragraph B.

"Article: Do you favor permitting the (name of municipality) to transfer from regional school unit (name of regional school unit) into regional school unit (name of regional school unit) as a participating municipality of that regional school unit subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement of transfer approved by the Commissioner of Education dated (insert date)?

Yes No"

A copy of the agreement must be posted with each warrant that directs the citizens to vote upon the question. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

D. The article must be approved by a majority of votes cast in both regional school units and by a majority of votes cast in the municipality to be transferred before the agreement may take effect. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

E. A complete certified record of the transaction involved in the transfer must be filed with the commissioner. The commissioner shall issue immediately a certificate of transfer to the secretaries of the regional school units by registered mail to be filed with the regional school unit boards involved and shall file a copy of the certificate of transfer in the office of the Secretary of State. [PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

3. Outstanding indebtedness. Whenever a municipality is detached from a regional school unit having outstanding indebtedness, the municipality remains as part of the regional school unit from which it was detached for the purposes of paying its proper portion of the indebtedness until the indebtedness is redeemed. The municipality is not part of the regional school unit from which it was detached for the purpose of any outstanding indebtedness incurred subsequent to the date of the certificate of transfer.

For purposes of this subsection, "outstanding indebtedness" means bonds or notes issued or assumed by the regional school unit board and lease-purchase agreements issued or assumed by the regional school unit, but does not include any indebtedness of the detaching municipality assumed by the regional school unit at the time of formation.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §10 (NEW).

§1468. State board review of commissioner's decisions

A regional school unit or other interested party may request that the state board reconsider decisions made by the commissioner under this subchapter. The state board has the authority to overturn

decisions made by the commissioner. In exercising this power, the state board is limited by this subchapter. [PL 2009, c. 580, §11 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §11 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 3

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE; PROGRAM

§1471. Regional school unit board

A regional school unit board must be established in accordance with this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Size. Following the initial certification of a regional school unit, any change in the size, composition or apportionment of the regional school unit board must be determined by a joint meeting of all the municipalities within the regional school unit. Unless determined otherwise pursuant to section 1472, each regional school unit board must include at least one director from each municipality or subdistrict.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Term of office. In municipalities with annual elections, directors serve 3-year terms. In municipalities with biennial elections, directors serve 4-year terms. A director serves until a successor is elected and qualified.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Compensation . Compensation for attendance at a regional school unit board meeting must be between \$10 and \$25 per meeting for each director. Whenever the directors recommend increasing their compensation, they shall submit their recommendation to the voters in the regional school unit for approval.

A. On notification by the regional school unit board, the municipal officers shall, at the next regular or special town meeting or city election, prepare a warrant or ballot for the purpose of voting on the proposed increase. The question must be in the following form.

"Do you favor paying a member of the regional school unit board of directors compensation at the rate of \$.... for each meeting that member attends?" [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. An increase in compensation is not effective unless approved by a majority of the voters voting on the question set out in paragraph A. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Secretary and treasurer . The superintendent serves as secretary and treasurer of the regional school unit board and shall give a bond to the regional school unit board of a sum and with the sureties as the regional school unit determines. The bond must be deposited with the chair of the regional school unit board. The expense of that bond must be paid by the regional school unit. The bond premium, compensation paid directors for attendance at meetings and expenses of the regional school unit must be paid from funds of the regional school unit by the treasurer on vouchers presented and certified by the superintendent and approved by a majority of the regional school unit board or a finance committee duly elected annually by that board.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Oath of office . Before a newly elected director's first regional school unit board meeting, that director must take the following oath or affirmation before a dedimus justice or notary public.

"I do swear that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my abilities the duties incumbent on me as a regional school unit board director of (name of regional school unit) according to the Constitution of Maine and laws of this State, so help me God."

A. A director shall take the oath or affirmation and return a certificate documenting that the oath or affirmation has been taken to the secretary of the regional school unit to place in the regional school unit board records. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If a director is conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath, the word "affirm" may be used instead of "swear" and the words "this I do under the pains and penalty of perjury" may be used instead of the words "so help me God." [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Election of officers. The regional school unit board shall elect a chair and vice-chair and other officers as may be necessary.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1472. Methods of apportionment

1. Method A: subdistrict representation. Under the method of representation referred to as "Method A," directors represent subdistricts.

A. The subdistricts, as far as practicable, must be whole municipalities. If the municipalities are divided into subdistricts, then they must be divided into subdistricts of approximately equal size as determined by the latest Federal Decennial Census or Federal Estimated Census. The municipal officers shall provide a separate voting place for each subdistrict of the municipality. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The boundaries of each subdistrict must be determined by a majority vote of the reapportionment committee under section 1475. Each subdistrict must have one director, except that in a municipality composed of 2 or more subdistricts, the joint meeting may authorize the election of directors-at-large. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Method B: weighted votes. Under the method of representation referred to as "Method B," directors cast weighted votes.

A. The reapportionment committee under section 1475 shall apportion 1,000 votes among all the members of the board. The ratio of the number of votes cast by the directors representing a municipality in relation to the number 1,000 must be the same ratio to the nearest whole number as the population of the municipality is in relation to the population of all municipalities in the regional school unit, as determined by the latest Federal Decennial Census or Federal Estimated Census. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. To ensure the use of whole numbers, the 1,000 votes apportioned among the board members may not be increased or decreased by more than 5 votes. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. A plan may not permit the voting power of any director to exceed by more than 5% the percentage of voting power the director would have if all 1,000 votes were apportioned equally among the directors. [PL 2007, c. 668, §7 (AMD).]

D. In a municipality served by 2 or more directors, the votes cast by them must be divided equally among them. The directors are elected at large within the municipality unless otherwise provided by municipal charter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §7 (AMD).]

3. Method C: at-large voting . Under the method of representation referred to as "Method C," directors are elected at large by all of the voters in the regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Method D: other. Under the method of representation referred to as "Method D," directors are elected by any method other than those set forth in subsections 1, 2 and 3 that meets the requirements of the one-person, one-vote principle.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §7 (AMD).

§1472-A. Election of initial regional school unit board

1. Election; interim secretary; duties. Within 30 days of the issuance of a certificate of organization for the regional school unit by the state board pursuant to section 1461, subsection 7, the members of the school boards of the school administrative units within the regional school unit shall conduct a joint meeting for the purposes of electing an interim secretary of the regional school unit and determining a date for the election of the initial regional school unit board. The interim secretary shall notify the municipal officers of the member municipalities of the regional school unit of the date of the election. The election must be conducted in accordance with section 1473, subsection 2, except that the election duties of the secretary and the regional school unit board must be performed by the interim secretary. The duties of the interim secretary include:

A. Notifying the municipal officers of the date of the election; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

B. Furnishing nomination papers at least 10 days before the deadline for filing nomination papers; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

C. Receiving completed nomination papers in accordance with section 1473, subsection 2; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

D. Preparing and distributing election ballots in accordance with section 1473, subsection 2; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

E. Receiving the town clerk's certification of the results of the voting in each member municipality; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

F. Tabulating the town clerk's certification of the results of the voting in each member municipality; [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

G. Accepting any recount petitions that may have been filed pursuant to section 1473, subsection 2, paragraph C; and [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

H. Totaling the votes cast for each candidate and notifying the clerk in each municipality, the candidates and the commissioner of the final results of the voting and the names and addresses of the persons elected as directors. [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

2. Initial meeting. In accordance with section 1473, subsection 1, the clerk of each municipality within the regional school unit shall forward the names and addresses of the directors elected to represent that municipality to the state board with other data regarding their election as the state board may require. On receipt of the names and addresses of all of the directors, the state board shall set a time, place and date for the first meeting of the directors and give notice to the directors in writing, sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the addresses provided by the municipalities. [PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §8 (NEW).

§1472-B. Staggered initial terms

Notwithstanding section 1471, subsection 2, the initial directors elected to a regional school unit board shall meet and draw lots for their term lengths as specified in this section. [PL 2007, c. 668, §9 (NEW).]

1. Municipalities with annual elections. In municipalities with annual elections, 1/3 of the directors serve one-year terms, 1/3 of the directors serve 2-year terms and 1/3 of the directors serve 3-year terms. If the number of directors is not evenly divisible by 3, the first remaining director serves a 3-year term and the 2nd remaining director serves a 2-year term.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §9 (NEW).]

2. Municipalities with biennial elections. In municipalities with biennial elections, half of the directors serve 4-year terms and half of the directors serve 2-year terms. If the number of directors is not divisible by 2, the remaining director serves a 4-year term.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §9 (NEW).]

The directors shall serve their terms as determined under this section and any additional period until the next regular election of the municipalities. Thereafter, the directors' terms of office are as established in section 1471. [PL 2007, c. 668, §9 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §9 (NEW).

§1472-C. Term of office for elected directors

Notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter, a regional school unit board may place an article before the voters in the member municipalities of the regional school unit that would permit the regional school unit board to establish a single common date for beginning the term of office for duly elected directors when the board members are elected at the regular municipal election of the member municipalities and these municipal elections are held at different times. [PL 2009, c. 580, §12 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §12 (NEW).

§1473. Election

For the purpose of nominations, regional school unit board directors are considered municipal officials and must be nominated in accordance with Title 30-A, chapter 121 or with a municipal charter, whichever is applicable. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Initial meeting on regional school unit formation. On the election of the regional school unit board of directors, the clerk of each municipality within the regional school unit shall forward the names and addresses of the directors elected for that municipality to the state board with other data with regard to their election as the state board may require. On receipt of the names and addresses of all of the directors, the state board shall set a time, place and date for the first meeting of the directors and give notice to the directors in writing, sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the addresses provided by the municipalities.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Special provisions. In the election for representation under the methods provided under section 1472, the provisions of this subsection apply.

A. In an election under Method A pursuant to section 1472, subsection 1:

- (1) Within 60 days, but no earlier than 45 days after notification by the regional school unit board of the approval of the reapportionment plan under section 1475, the municipal officers shall call a special election to elect directors to serve under the plan for the regional school unit;
 - (2) Nomination papers must be furnished by the secretary of the regional school unit at least 10 days before the deadline for filing nomination papers. Notwithstanding any other section of this Title, directors must be nominated by obtaining a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 50 signatures of registered voters residing within a subdistrict. The secretary shall notify the municipal officers of the names of candidates in each subdistrict;
 - (3) The ballots must be prepared in accordance with subparagraph (7);
 - (4) The clerks of each municipality shall forward to the secretary of the regional school unit the results of the vote by subdistrict;
 - (5) The regional school unit board shall meet and total the votes cast for each candidate within each subdistrict and shall immediately notify the clerks in each municipality, the candidates and the commissioner of the results of the vote;
 - (6) The terms of the directors elected under the original municipal representation system cease on the date that the newly elected directors are sworn into office; and
 - (7) Notwithstanding any other provision of statute, directors must be elected by secret ballot. The ballots must be prepared for and distributed to the municipalities or subdistricts by the secretary of the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- B. In an election under Method B pursuant to section 1472, subsection 2, a reduction in the number of directors, the addition of directors and the terms of office of additional directors must be in accordance with this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- C. In an election under Method C pursuant to section 1472, subsection 3:
- (1) Nominations for directors must be made on petitions provided by the regional school unit secretary. The petitions must be signed as provided in Title 30-A, section 2528, subsection 4 or, if the candidate is a voting resident in a municipality having a population of less than 200, signed by at least 20% of the registered voters of that municipality;
 - (2) The petitions must be submitted to the registrar of voters in the respective municipalities for certification of the voting residence of the nominee and of the voters signing the petition;
 - (3) The registrar of voters must return the certified petitions to the regional school unit secretary not later than 30 days prior to the date of the annual election to be held in the municipality;
 - (4) The ballots must be prepared and distributed by the regional school unit secretary. It must give the number of offices to be filled and list the candidates by the municipality or subdistrict in which they are resident;
 - (5) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, regional school unit board directors must be elected by secret ballot;
 - (6) If member municipalities do not all conduct the election for directors on the same date, then all ballots cast in the elections must be impounded by the clerk of each municipality:
 - (a) After all municipalities have voted, the clerks and one or more election supervisors designated by the municipal officers of each municipality shall meet at an agreed-upon location and tally the ballots;
 - (b) The tally must be completed within one day of the last member municipality election;

(c) The election supervisors shall select from among their members a chair, who shall supervise the tally of ballots; and

(d) The clerk of each municipality shall as promptly as possible after the election certify to the regional school unit board the result of the voting in that municipality; and

(7) Any recount petitions must be filed with the secretary of the regional school unit, and recounts must be conducted in each member municipality in accordance with the applicable laws. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1474. Vacancies

1. Definition of vacancy. A vacancy on a regional school unit board occurs:

A. When the term of office of a regional school unit board director expires; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. When a regional school unit board director changes residency from the municipality or subdistrict from which elected. Evidence that an individual is registered to vote in a municipality is prima facie evidence of that individual's residency; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. On the death of a regional school unit board director; or [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. When a regional school unit board director resigns. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

In addition to paragraphs A, B, C and D, except in municipalities having a municipal charter, when a director is absent without excuse from 3 consecutive regular board meetings, the regional school unit board may declare that a vacancy exists.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Regional school unit board. The regional school unit board shall notify the municipal officers of the municipalities within the regional school unit of a vacancy before the annual town meeting or before the regular municipal election.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Filling vacancies. A vacancy on a regional school unit board must be filled according to this subsection.

A. The municipal officers of the municipality in which the director resided shall select an interim director for the municipality or subdistrict to serve until the next annual municipal election. The interim director shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The municipal officers shall provide at the next municipal or subdistrict election for the election of a director to fill the vacancy. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1475. Reapportionment

The commissioner shall determine the necessity for reapportionment. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Duties of commissioner. The commissioner shall determine if a regional school unit is apportioned in accordance with the one-person, one-vote principle if:

A. The commissioner receives a request by the regional school unit board; or [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The commissioner receives a petition signed by a number of regional school unit voters equal to at least 10% of the voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election in the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

In addition to a determination initiated by a request pursuant to paragraph A or a petition pursuant to paragraph B, the commissioner may, of the commissioner's own accord, determine that a regional school unit is not apportioned according to the one-person, one-vote principle.

The commissioner shall make a determination under paragraph A or B within 30 days of receiving the request or the petition.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Awaiting census results. If the commissioner receives a request within 12 months before a Federal Decennial Census or Federal Estimated Census, the commissioner may wait until after the new census figures are available to make a determination under subsection 1.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Findings and order. If the commissioner finds the regional school unit representation is not apportioned in accordance with the principle of one person, one vote, the commissioner, within 7 days of that decision, shall notify the superintendent of the regional school unit of the finding and order the superintendent to notify the municipal officers in each municipality in the regional school unit and the regional school unit board to create a reapportionment committee. The superintendent's notification must include the commissioner's notification, the information provided pursuant to subsection 6 and the time and place for the first meeting of the committee, which must be held not later than 20 days after the notification.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Reapportionment committee membership. The reapportionment committee consists of one municipal officer and one citizen from each member municipality, chosen by the respective municipal officers, and one director from each municipality, chosen by the board of directors. The appointments must be made prior to the first meeting of the committee.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Quorum. A majority of the reapportionment committee constitutes a quorum.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Duties of commissioner. The commissioner shall provide the superintendent of the regional school unit with the most recent Federal Decennial Census or Federal Estimated Census figures for each municipality in the regional school unit and at least one recommended apportionment plan.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

7. Duties of the reapportionment committee. The reapportionment committee shall:

A. Elect a chair and secretary and may adopt suitable rules of procedure; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Consider and by majority vote adopt a reapportionment plan including the method of representation, total number of directors and number of directors representing each municipality or subdistrict; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Within 90 days of the first meeting, send a report of its reapportionment plan to the state board for approval. It may, within the 90-day limit, submit alternative plans for apportionment. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

8. Commissioner approval. The commissioner shall approve or disapprove the reapportionment committee plan under subsection 7 within 30 days of receiving it.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

9. Failure to gain commissioner approval. If a reapportionment plan has not been adopted by the reapportionment committee or approved by the commissioner within the time limits of subsection 7, the commissioner shall prepare a suitable plan.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

10. Putting the approved plan into effect. On approval of a reapportionment plan, the commissioner shall send a certified copy to the municipal officers and regional school unit board. The original reapportionment plan must be retained in the department files.

A. The reapportionment plan takes effect immediately upon approval. The reapportionment committee shall determine the terms of the directors to be elected at the next annual municipal elections so as to comply with this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If the approved reapportionment plan requires a reduction of the number of directors to be elected in a municipality, the reduction must be achieved in accordance with this paragraph.

(1) If possible, the reduction must be achieved by the voluntary resignation of one or more of the directors.

(2) If the reduction cannot be achieved in accordance with subparagraph (1) and the plan is approved and filed less than 30 days prior to the annual municipal election, the number of open positions to be filled by the election process must be reduced to the number required by the approved plan.

(3) If the reduction cannot be achieved in accordance with subparagraph (1) or (2), or a combination of the 2, all of the remaining existing directors representing the municipality shall choose by lot which directors' terms must terminate. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. If the approved reapportionment plan requires that additional directors be elected in a municipality, the municipal officers shall fill the vacancies by appointment. A new director serves until a successor is elected and qualified at the next annual municipal election. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. The reapportionment committee is dissolved after the approved reapportionment plan is implemented. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

11. Duties of present directors during reapportionment. The regional school unit board, during the reapportionment of its membership, serves as the legal representative of the regional school unit until the reapportionment is completed. The board shall carry out all business of the regional school unit, including the borrowing of funds that may be required during the period of reapportionment.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

12. State board review of commissioner's decisions. A regional school unit board or interested parties may request that the state board reconsider decisions made by the commissioner under this section. The state board has the authority to overturn a decision made by the commissioner. In exercising this power, the state board is limited by this section.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1476. Powers and duties

The regional school unit board: [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Regional school unit name. May select an unofficial name for the regional school unit; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Finance committee. May elect a finance committee of 3 or more members, who must be directors; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Operating schools. Shall authorize and oversee the operation of schools within the regional school unit; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Purchase land outside the regional school unit. May purchase land outside of the geographical limits of the regional school unit and erect a school on that land if, because of the location of other schools within the regional school unit or transportation difficulties, a school within the geographical limits of the regional school unit would not be in the best interests of the regional school unit community; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Bylaws. Shall adopt bylaws for the regulation of the affairs of the regional school unit board and the conduct of its business; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Gifts. May accept and receive money or other property, outright or in trust, for any specified benevolent or educational purpose. The regional school unit board shall comply with this subsection in accepting gifts.

A. If the regional school unit board receives written notice from a prospective donor or a representative of the donor of a proposed gift, the regional school unit board shall submit the matter to its next regular meeting or shall call a special meeting and shall, within 10 days after the meeting, send written notice to the prospective donor or representative of its acceptance or rejection. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If the gift is in trust, the regional school unit board shall cause the trust funds to be deposited or invested according to Title 30-A, chapter 223, subchapter 3-A.

(1) Unless prohibited by a trust instrument, the regional school unit may treat any 2 or more trust funds as a single fund for the purposes of investment.

(2) After deduction for management expenses, any interest earned or capital gains realized must be prorated among the various trust funds.

(3) Property or securities included in the corpus of a trust fund must be retained where the trust instrument so provides.

(4) Unless otherwise specified in the trust instrument, only the annual income from the trust fund may be spent.

(5) If the regional school unit fails to comply with the terms of the trust instrument, the trust fund reverts to the donor or the donor's heirs. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. If the money or other property is a conditional gift for any specified benevolent or educational purpose, this paragraph applies.

(1) Prior to the acceptance of a gift, the regional school unit board must obtain approval of the legislative body of the regional school unit.

(2) When the donor's part of the agreement respecting the execution of the conditional gift has been completed, the regional school unit shall perpetually comply with, and may raise money to carry into effect, the conditions upon which it was made.

(3) Unless otherwise specified by its terms, a conditional gift of money must be deposited or invested according to Title 30-A, chapter 223, subchapter 3-A. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1477. Quorum

A majority of the regional school unit board directors in number and voting power constitutes a quorum. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1478. Local school committees

1. Formation. A reorganization plan under section 1461 or a regional school unit board may authorize the formation of a local school committee for a member municipality established in accordance with chapter 111, subchapter 1.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §10 (NEW).]

2. Delegation of functions. A reorganization plan that has been approved in accordance with subchapter 2 or a regional school unit board may delegate a local school committee to perform any duties, functions and services other than those reserved to the regional school unit under subchapter 1. The core functions provided by a regional school unit pursuant to section 1452 may be supplemented at the expense of any member municipality.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §10 (NEW).]

3. Budget responsibility. A reorganization plan that has been approved in accordance with subchapter 2 or a regional school unit board may authorize a local school committee to present to the board a proposed budget for the local school in a form that is consistent with section 1485. The proposed local school budget must be submitted in time to be included in the budget for the regional school unit. Proposed expenditures that are not included in the regional school unit budget may be separately appropriated by the municipality to be expended by the regional school unit in accordance with the appropriation. Supplemental municipal appropriations for education are not subject to section 1486.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §10 (NEW).]

4. Title to property. School property overseen by a local school committee may be owned either by the municipality or by the regional school unit as long as there is a clear allocation of responsibilities for management of all of the school property in the regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §10 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §10 (RPR).

§1479. Program

A regional school unit shall maintain a program that includes kindergarten to grade 12 except for the school administrative districts that did not operate kindergarten to grade 12 that were reformulated into regional school units in accordance with Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36,

subsection 12, as amended by Public Law 2007, chapter 668, section 48, and except for a regional school unit operating under a plan described in section 1461, subsection 3, paragraph B, subparagraph (2), divisions (a) to (c). [PL 2021, c. 537, §4 (AMD).]

1. Secondary school. A secondary school facility may be operated as a 4-year school, as a 6-year school for grades 7 to 12 or as 2 or more 3-year schools, except that students living in an area remote from a public school may be provided for under section 5204. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Contracts for secondary school programs. In addition to the provisions for a secondary school facility set forth in subsection 1, a regional school unit may contract with a nearby regional school unit or with a private school approved for tuition purposes for all or some of its secondary school students. The contract may run from a period of 2 to 10 years. The contract must also comply with section 2703 and may provide for the formation of a joint committee in accordance with section 2704. A regional school unit in which a previous education unit has contracted for secondary school programs is bound by the terms of that contract, unless otherwise negotiated by the parties. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Expiration of contract. After July 1, 2008, if a contract between a previous education unit and another previous education unit or a private school approved for tuition purposes expires, and the previous education unit that was the sending unit is a member of a regional school unit under this chapter, the provisions of this subsection apply.

A. If the option of attending a public school in another school administrative unit or a private school approved for tuition purposes subject to chapter 219 was available to students in the previous education unit, that option continues to be available to students who reside in the municipalities that composed the previous education unit after the municipality's inclusion in the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The regional school unit may negotiate a new contract pursuant to chapter 115. [PL 2007, c. 668, §11 (AMD).]
[PL 2007, c. 668, §11 (AMD).]

4. Absence of contract; maintenance of school choice opportunities. A school administrative unit that neither maintains a school nor contracts for school privileges pursuant to chapter 115 shall continue to pay tuition, in accordance with chapter 219, for a student who resides in the school administrative unit at the public school or the private school approved for tuition purposes of the parent's choice at which the student is accepted, calculated in accordance with subsection 5. [PL 2007, c. 668, §12 (AMD).]

5. Additional expense. In a regional school unit where some but not all of the students are attending school pursuant to this section, the sending municipality is responsible for the additional expense as calculated in accordance with this subsection.

A. For each secondary school student who attends a public school in another school administrative unit, the sending municipality in a regional school unit is responsible for an amount equal to the difference in tuition in cases when it exceeds the amount of the regional school unit's tuition rate calculated in accordance with section 5805. [PL 2007, c. 668, §13 (AMD).]

B. For each secondary school student who attends a private school approved for tuition purposes subject to the provisions of chapter 219, the sending municipality in a regional school unit is responsible for an amount equal to the difference in tuition in cases when it exceeds the amount of the regional school unit's tuition rate calculated in accordance with section 5805. [PL 2007, c. 668, §13 (AMD).]

Municipalities exercising school choice pursuant to this section are responsible for a local contribution in accordance with section 15688 and the additional expense calculated in accordance with this subsection.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §13 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §§11-13 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 171, §2 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 537, §4 (AMD).

SUBCHAPTER 4

FINANCING

§1481. Finances

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §14 (RP).

§1481-A. Finances

1. Apportionment of costs for regional school unit. A regional school unit may raise money, in addition to the local contribution pursuant to section 15690, subsection 1, for establishing and maintaining public schools, erecting buildings and providing equipment for educational purposes. The additional costs of operating a regional school unit must be shared among all municipalities within the regional school unit by the same local share percentages for each municipality resulting from the determination of the local contribution under section 15688.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

2. Existing cost-sharing agreement. Notwithstanding subsection 1, a cost-sharing agreement in existence on June 7, 2007 that was adopted pursuant to Public Law 2005, chapter 2 or pursuant to a private and special law remains in existence unless the parties to the agreement modify or terminate the agreement:

A. As part of a reorganization to regional school units under this chapter; or [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

B. As a result of a negotiated agreement between the parties to the cost-sharing agreement. [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

2-A. Reformulated school administrative district cost-sharing. For those school administrative districts recreated as regional school units pursuant to Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36, subsection 12 as amended by chapter 668, methods of cost-sharing and amendments of the cost-sharing formula must be in accordance with section 1301.

[PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. E, §3 (NEW).]

3. Method included in reorganization plan. Notwithstanding subsection 1, a regional school unit may use a method of cost sharing that was included in a reorganization plan developed pursuant to section 1461 or Public Law 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX, section 36 as long as the method complies with this subsection.

A. The costs of operating a regional school unit must be shared among all municipalities within the unit in one of the following ways.

(1) Under a property valuation method, municipalities in a unit shall share costs in the same proportion as each municipality's property fiscal capacity as defined in section 15672, subsection 23 is to the unit's property fiscal capacity.

(2) Under an alternate method of cost sharing, municipalities in a unit shall share costs based on:

- (a) The number of resident pupils in each town;
- (b) The property fiscal capacity of each member municipality as defined in section 15672, subsection 23;
- (c) Any combination of divisions (a) and (b); or
- (d) Any other factor or combination of factors that may, but need not, include divisions (a) or (b). [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

B. A process of amending the cost-sharing formula must be included in the reorganization plan. [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a cost-sharing agreement in existence on June 7, 2007 that was adopted pursuant to Public Law 2005, chapter 2 or pursuant to a private and special law may not be construed to preempt the formation of a regional school unit under this chapter. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a cost-sharing agreement between 2 or more municipalities in existence on June 7, 2007 that was adopted prior to June 7, 2007 may not be construed to preempt the formation of a regional school unit under this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

Notwithstanding any provisions of law to the contrary, a municipality within a regional school unit may raise money and direct the spending of the funds to any school within the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §15 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. E, §3 (AMD).

§1481-B. Application

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §16 (NEW). MRSA T. 20-A §1481-B (RP).

§1482. Budget preparation

1. Preparation by regional school unit board. A regional school unit board shall annually prepare a budget for:

- A. Operational costs; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- B. Bonds falling due; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- C. Interest on bonds or other obligations; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- D. Rentals and other charges in a contract; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- E. Temporary loans. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Distribution. At least 7 days before a regional school unit budget meeting, the regional school unit board shall make available to the legislative body responsible for final budget approval and residents of the regional school unit a detailed budget document. The detailed budget document must include a summary of anticipated revenues and estimated school expenditures.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1482-A. Budget meeting

A regional school unit board shall hold a regional school unit budget meeting at a time it determines. [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

1. Warrant. The budget meeting must be called by a warrant. The warrant must:

A. Be signed by a majority of the regional school unit board; [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

B. Specify the time and place of the meeting; [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

C. Include the proposed school budget and other articles the regional school unit board chooses to place before the voters, excluding authorization to borrow money for school construction purposes; [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

D. Specify the state and local shares of the state-local allocation and local leeway and additional expenditures without state participation; and [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

E. Be directed to a resident of the regional school unit by name ordering the resident to notify all voters within the regional school unit to assemble at the time and place appointed. [PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

2. Notice. An attested copy of the warrant must be posted by the person to whom it is directed in some conspicuous public place in each of the municipalities within the regional school unit at least 7 days before the meeting. The person who gives notice of the meeting shall make a return of the posting on the warrant stating the manner of notice in each municipality and the time when it was given.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

3. Requested articles. If requested by a written petition of at least 10% of the number of voters voting for the gubernatorial candidates in the last gubernatorial election in each municipality within the regional school unit, the regional school unit board shall place specific articles, not in conflict with existing state statutes, in the warrants for consideration at the next annual regional school unit budget meeting. To be included in the warrant, a petition must be received by the regional school unit board at least 15 days before the date set for the budget meeting. When placed on the warrant, the articles must be considered before action relating to the appropriation of money for the operation of schools may be taken.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §17 (NEW).

§1482-B. Annual budget meeting procedures

The following procedures must be used at a regional school unit annual budget meeting. [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

1. Election of moderator. The secretary of the regional school unit board or the chair of the regional school unit board when the secretary is absent shall open the annual budget meeting and call for the election of a moderator, receive and count votes for the moderator and swear in the moderator. [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

2. Appointing ballot clerks. The moderator shall appoint from the certified voting list the ballot clerks necessary for the efficient operation of the annual budget meeting. The moderator shall swear in the clerks.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

3. Budget consideration. The superintendent of the regional school unit shall thoroughly explain the budget. The voters must have an opportunity to be heard. The voters may change only items dealing with:

- A. The expenses necessary to operate the regional school unit; [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]
- B. Appropriations for the reserve fund; and [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]
- C. Appropriations for the contingency fund and school construction purposes. [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

4. Approval. A majority vote of those voters present and voting is necessary for the approval of the annual budget.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

5. Voting lists. Registration of voters for the annual budget meeting must be held in each member municipality in accordance with Title 21-A, section 122.

A. Prior to the annual budget meeting, the municipal clerks of the member municipalities shall supply to the regional school unit board certified corrected copies of the registered voters of their municipalities. [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

B. The certified corrected copies under paragraph A must be used in determining the voters who are eligible to vote at the annual budget meeting. [PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

6. Written ballot. An article must be voted on by written ballot if at least 10% of those present and voting vote to use a written ballot. The department, in consultation with municipal and school officials and with organizations representing those officials, shall develop and distribute guidelines to assist regional school unit annual budget meeting moderators in explaining and implementing this subsection.

[PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 668, §18 (NEW).

§1483. Regional school unit budget; budget formats

1. Content. Beginning with the budget for the 2008-2009 school year, a regional school unit shall include in its budget document:

A. The regional school unit's total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12, its non-state-funded debt service, if any, and any additional expenditures authorized by law; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. A summary of anticipated revenues and estimated school expenditures for the fiscal year; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. The following statement, including the estimated dollar amount of state retirement payments: "This budget does not include the estimated amount of \$..... in employer share of teacher retirement costs that is paid directly by the State." [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1484. Checklist required

Beginning with the budget for the 2008-2009 school year, prior to a vote on articles dealing with regional school unit appropriations, the moderator of a regular or special regional school unit budget meeting shall require the clerk or secretary of the regional school unit board to make a checklist of the registered voters present. The number of voters listed on the checklist is conclusive evidence of the number present at the meeting. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1485. Cost center summary budget format

After January 31, 2008, the format of the annual budget of a regional school unit must be in accordance with this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Cost center summary budget format. The regional school unit budget must consist of the following cost centers and supporting data:

A. Expenditures:

- (1) Regular instruction;
- (2) Special education;
- (3) Career and technical education;
- (4) Other instruction, including summer school and extracurricular instruction;
- (5) Student and staff support;
- (6) System administration;
- (7) School administration;
- (8) Transportation and buses;
- (9) Facilities maintenance;
- (10) Debt service and other commitments; and
- (11) All other expenditures, including school lunch; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Revenue sources:

- (1) Total education costs appropriated pursuant to section 15690, subsection 1;
- (2) Non-state-funded debt service costs approved pursuant to section 15690, subsection 2, if any; and
- (3) Additional local funds, if any, approved pursuant to section 15690, subsection 3, paragraph A; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. A summary of total regional school unit expenditures; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. Other optional local data showing the amount and percentage of changes proposed in the state allocation, the local share and the total regional school unit budget and related information determined appropriate by the regional school unit board of directors; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

E. Data similar to that provided in paragraph A for a high-performing regional school unit of a size and demographic profile determined by the department that is comparable to the regional school unit; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

F. For fiscal year 2008-09, data documenting state and local savings from the reorganization to regional school units and the resulting mill rate reduction for each municipality. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1-A. Instructional expenditures transition; annual targets. Each school administrative unit shall meet the annual targets for the direct instruction percentage share of total General Fund expenditures as follows:

- A. For fiscal year 2018-19, the target is 61%; [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]
- B. For fiscal year 2019-20, the target is 63%; [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]
- C. For fiscal year 2020-21, the target is 65%; [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]
- D. For fiscal year 2021-22, the target is 67%; and [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]
- E. For fiscal year 2022-23 and succeeding years, the target is 70%. [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]

For the purposes of this subsection, "direct instruction" means those expenditures in subsection 1, paragraph A for regular instruction, special education instruction, career and technical education instruction and other instruction including summer school instruction and extracurricular instruction as defined in the State's accounting handbook for local school systems.

[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (NEW).]

2. Budget warrant. The warrant articles presented to the legislative body of the regional school unit for approval of the regional school unit budget must correspond to the categories of the cost center summary budget described in subsection 1. In addition to expenditure and revenue cost center summary totals, the regional school unit board shall provide to voters a reasonably detailed breakdown for each major subcategory within each budget category. The department shall adopt routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A defining and establishing the content of those informational subcategories.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Budget approval. A regional school unit's cost center summary budget must be approved at a regional school unit budget meeting and by a budget validation referendum as provided in section 1486.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Transfer between budget cost center lines. During the year for which the budget is approved using the cost center summary budget format, the regional school unit board may transfer an amount not exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers without voter approval.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Additional state subsidy. The warrant presented to the legislative body of the regional school unit at a regional school unit budget meeting may include an article or articles providing that, in the event that the regional school unit receives more state education subsidy than the amount included in its budget, the regional school unit board is authorized to use all or part of the additional subsidy to:

A. Increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the regional school unit board. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum; [PL 2015, c. 463, §1 (NEW).]

B. Increase the allocation of finances in a reserve fund. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may increase the allocation of finances for a

reserve fund approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum; or [PL 2015, c. 463, §1 (NEW).]

C. Decrease the local cost share expectation, as defined in section 15671-A, subsection 1, paragraph B, for local property taxpayers for funding public education. If that article is approved by the voters at the budget meeting, the regional school unit board may decrease the local cost share expectation for local property taxpayers approved by the regional school unit board as provided in the article, without holding a special budget meeting and budget validation referendum. [PL 2015, c. 463, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2015, c. 463, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2015, c. 463, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. C, §4 (AMD).

§1486. Budget validation referendum

After January 31, 2008, the procedure for approval of the annual budget of a regional school unit must be in accordance with this section and section 1485. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

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

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

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

[PL 2011, c. 171, §3 (AMD).]

2. Validation referendum procedures. The budget validation referendum must be held on or before the 45th calendar day following the scheduled date of the regional school unit budget meeting. The referendum may not be held on a Sunday or legal holiday. The vote at referendum is for the purpose of approving or rejecting the total regional school unit budget approved at the regional school unit budget meeting. The regional school unit board shall provide printed information to be displayed at polling places to assist voters in voting. That information is limited to the total amounts proposed by the regional school unit board for each cost center summary budget category article, the amount approved at the regional school unit budget meeting, a summary of the total authorized expenditures and, if applicable because of action on an article under section 15690, subsection 3, paragraph A, a statement that the amount approved at the regional school unit budget meeting includes locally raised

funds that exceed the maximum state and local spending target pursuant to section 15671-A, subsection 5. If the legislative body of the regional school unit at the regional school unit budget meeting approves an article pursuant to section 1485, subsection 5, the substance of the article must be included in the printed information displayed at polling places for the budget validation referendum.

[PL 2023, c. 256, §1 (AMD).]

3. Budget validation referendum voting. The method of calling and voting at a budget validation referendum is as provided in sections 1502 and 1503, except as otherwise provided in this subsection or as is inconsistent with other requirements of this section.

A. A public hearing is not required before the vote. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. [PL 2007, c. 668, §20 (RP).]

C. The warrant and absentee ballots must be delivered to the municipal clerk no later than the day after the date of the regional school unit budget meeting. [PL 2007, c. 668, §20 (AMD).]

D. Absentee ballots received by the municipal clerk may not be processed or counted unless received on the day after the conclusion of the regional school unit budget meeting and before the close of the polls. [PL 2007, c. 668, §20 (AMD).]

E. All envelopes containing absentee ballots received before the day after the conclusion of the regional school unit budget meeting or after the close of the polls must be marked "rejected" by the municipal clerk. [PL 2007, c. 668, §20 (AMD).]

F. The article to be voted on must be in the following form:

(1) "Do you favor approving the (name of regional school unit) budget for the upcoming school year that was adopted at the latest (name of regional school unit) budget meeting?

Yes No" [PL 2009, c. 415, Pt. B, §7 (RPR).]

G. [PL 2009, c. 415, Pt. B, §8 (RP).]

[PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. E, §4 (AMD).]

4. Failure to approve budget. If the voters do not validate the budget approved in the regional school unit budget meeting at the budget validation referendum vote, the regional school unit board shall hold another regional school unit budget meeting in accordance with this section and section 1485 at least 10 days but no longer than 45 days after the referendum to vote on a budget approved by the regional school unit board. The budget approved at the regional school unit budget meeting must be submitted to the voters for validation at referendum in accordance with this section. The process must be repeated until a budget is approved at a regional school unit budget meeting and validated at referendum. If a budget is not approved and validated before July 1st of each year, section 1487 applies. [PL 2011, c. 678, Pt. B, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §§19, 20 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 695, Pt. G, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 98, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 415, Pt. B, §§7, 8 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. E, §4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 571, Pt. QQQ, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 171, §3 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 678, Pt. B, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 463, §2 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 256, §1 (AMD).

§1487. Failure to pass budget

If a budget for the operation of a regional school unit is not approved prior to July 1st, the latest budget approved at a regional school unit budget meeting and submitted to the voters for validation at a referendum in accordance with section 1486 is automatically considered the budget for operational expenses for the ensuing year until a final budget is approved, except that, when the regional school unit board delays the regional school unit budget meeting, the operating budget must be approved

within 30 days of the date the commissioner notifies the regional school unit board of the amount allocated to the regional school unit under section 15689-B, or the latest budget submitted by the regional school unit board becomes the operating budget for the next school year until a budget is approved at a regional school unit budget meeting and validated at a referendum. If the budget of a regional school unit is not approved and validated before July 1st and the officers of any affected municipality determine that the property taxes must be committed in a timely manner to the collector pursuant to Title 36, section 709, the municipal assessor or assessors may commit the property taxes on the basis of the latest budget approved at a regional school unit budget meeting and submitted to the voters for validation at a referendum in accordance with section 1486. [PL 2007, c. 668, §21 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §21 (AMD).

§1488. Special budget meeting

The regional school unit board may call a special budget meeting when it declares that an emergency exists. The voters of the regional school unit may authorize the regional school unit board at a special regional school unit budget meeting to expend additional funds from the regional school unit's undesignated fund balance or to pledge the credit of the regional school unit to obtain additional money for the operation of schools. A special budget meeting held on or after July 1, 2008 must be conducted in accordance with sections 1485 and 1486. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1489. Regional school unit assessments

Regional school unit assessments must follow the procedures set out in this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Warrant. In accordance with the budget approved by the voters at an annual budget meeting and in substantially the same form as the warrant of the Treasurer of State for taxes, the regional school unit board shall issue its warrants to the assessors of each member municipality requiring them to assess upon the taxable estates within the municipality an amount that is that municipality's share of the regional school unit's costs.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Commitment. The municipal assessors shall commit the assessment to the constable or collector. Constables and collectors have the authority and powers to collect the regional school unit's taxes as is vested in them by law to collect state, county and municipal taxes.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Installments. The regional school unit board shall notify the member municipalities of the monthly installments that will become payable during the fiscal year.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Payment. A municipal treasurer shall pay the amount of the tax assessed in the fiscal year against the municipality to the treasurer of the regional school unit. The payments must be paid in monthly installments on or before the 20th of each month.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Gifts. A municipality may use the proceeds from gifts or trust funds allocated for educational purposes to pay its share of the assessment.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Enforcement. If a municipal treasurer fails to pay the installment due, or any part, on the dates required, to initiate collection procedures, the treasurer of the regional school unit may notify the

municipal treasurer of the failure to pay. Interest accrues on each unpaid installment at the rate established under Title 36, section 186 beginning on the 60th day after the date the installment is due under subsection 4. If payment of an installment is not made within 60 days after the due date, the treasurer of the regional school unit may initiate an action in Superior Court to compel payment of the delinquent installment. The court shall determine the amount owed by the municipality to the regional school unit and shall order the municipal treasurer to pay all delinquent installments, accrued interest and any court costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the regional school unit. To ensure prompt payment of the delinquent installments, the court may require that amounts due to the municipality from the State under Title 30-A, section 5681 and Title 36, sections 578 and 685 be paid to the regional school unit until the amount determined by the court is satisfied. The court shall promptly notify the disbursing state agency of the determination and direct the agency to make the required change in payee and the amounts to be paid. If additional funds are needed to satisfy the amount determined by the court to be paid to the regional school unit, the court may order the attachment or trustee process and sale of real or personal property owned by the municipality or the attachment of the municipality's bank accounts or require property tax payments to the municipality to be turned over to the court and may pay the amount owed the regional school unit from the proceeds and return any excess to the municipality.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1490. Power to borrow money

1. Regional school unit board. A regional school unit board may borrow money to pay for:

A. Current operating expenses of the regional school unit if the loans are repaid within 13 months of the date of borrowing and are limited to an amount reasonably required for current operating expenses; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. School construction projects as defined in section 15901; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Minor capital costs as defined in section 15672, subsection 20-A. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Voter approval. Bonds or notes for school construction purposes must first be approved by a majority of voters of the regional school unit voting at an election called by the regional school unit board and held as provided in this chapter, except as is otherwise provided in this section.

A. Each bond or note must have inscribed upon its face the name of the regional school unit, the date it was issued, the amount of the bond or note and the annual interest rate, payable semiannually. Each bond or note must be in the form and be sold in the manner, at public or private sale, as the regional school unit board determines in accordance with state law. Bonds may not be sold for less than par. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Notes or bonds issued by a regional school unit must be signed by the treasurer or assistant superintendent and countersigned by the chair of the regional school unit board. If coupon bonds are issued, each coupon must be attested by a facsimile signature of the treasurer. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Each issue of bonds must mature in substantially equal annual installments so that the first installment is payable not later than 2 years and the last installment not later than 30 years after the date of issue. [PL 2023, c. 210, §2 (AMD).]

D. Notwithstanding paragraph C, bonds issued by a regional school unit for a non-state-funded school construction project under section 15905-A that is 100% locally funded may be repaid using a level debt payment structure only if the payment structure results in lower costs for the regional school unit throughout the life of the issue of the bonds. For purposes of this paragraph, "level debt payment structure" means a debt service structure in which the combined annual principal and interest payments remain approximately the same throughout the life of the issue of the bonds with increasing principal amounts and decreasing interest amounts each year. [PL 2015, c. 181, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 210, §2 (AMD).]

3. Temporary notes. Prior to issuing authorized school construction bonds or notes, the regional school unit board may borrow in anticipation of their sale by issuing temporary notes and renewal notes subject to this subsection.

A. The total face value amount of the temporary notes and renewal notes may not exceed at any one time the authorized outstanding amount of the school construction bonds or notes. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If the proceeds of an issue of bonds are used in whole or in part to fund temporary notes, the period during which the issue of bonds is outstanding plus the period of the loan represented by the temporary notes or renewal notes may not exceed 25 years. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Temporary notes mature not later than 3 years from the date the first temporary note is issued. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. Temporary notes and renewal notes are legal obligations of the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

E. A regional school unit board that has received a certificate of approval of a school construction project pursuant to former Title 20, section 3458 to be paid in accordance with the alternate method prescribed in former Title 20, section 3460 may borrow in anticipation of unpaid portions of state aid and may issue temporary and renewal notes. [PL 2019, c. 398, §10 (AMD).]

F. If the temporary or renewal notes in anticipation of state aid exceed the aggregate amount of state aid actually received by the regional school unit, the unexpended balance of those notes must be used for the repayment. If an outstanding balance remains, it must be included in the next annual budget and is not subject to change at the regional school unit budget meeting. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 398, §10 (AMD).]

4. Early redemption. Bonds or notes issued on behalf of a regional school unit may be made subject to call for redemption, with or without premium, at the election of the regional school unit board before the date fixed for final payment of those bonds or notes. When these bonds or notes are issued, they must contain provisions setting forth the method by which the option to call may be exercised, the procedure for payment in the event of call and the legal effect of making the call.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Regional school unit status. Notes and bonds, and loans to pay current operating expenses and contracts, are legal obligations of the regional school unit. The regional school unit is a quasi-municipal corporation within the meaning of Title 30-A, section 5701, and all the provisions of that section apply to it.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Debt limit. The aggregate principal amount of outstanding bonds or notes issued by a regional school unit for school construction purposes may not exceed, at any one time, 10% of the total of the last preceding state valuation of all the municipalities within the regional school unit plus an amount

not to exceed 4% of that total regional school unit valuation set by the state board at the time of the initial approval of the school construction project.

A. Indebtedness in excess of 10% incurred under the law as it existed prior to April 1, 1974 is validated. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Outstanding school indebtedness assumed by the regional school unit must be included in its limit of indebtedness, excluding contracts and notes in anticipation of state aid issued pursuant to subsection 3. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. The percentage limit of the indebtedness for bonds or notes for school construction purposes authorized after April 27, 1967 must be fixed as of the time of authorization by the voters or, if no regional school unit meeting is held to authorize those bonds or notes, upon the expiration of 35 days following passage of a resolution of the regional school unit board as described in subsection 7. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. If the issuance of bonds or notes together with all outstanding indebtedness included within the regional school unit's limit of indebtedness would cause the regional school unit's indebtedness to exceed 10% of the total of the last preceding state valuation of all the municipalities within the regional school unit, the regional school unit board may not issue those bonds or notes until it has received a certificate of approval pursuant to former Title 20, section 3458. [PL 2019, c. 398, §11 (AMD).]

E. If a certificate of approval under former Title 20, section 3458 indicates that the state board has authorized state aid to be paid in accordance with the alternate method prescribed by former Title 20, section 3460, the total estimated amount of state aid payable on account of the school construction project described in the certificate of approval must be treated as outstanding school indebtedness for the purpose of computing the borrowing capacity of the regional school unit to finance that project by issuing its bonds or notes. State aid is determined by applying the applicable percentage of state aid to the total estimated cost of the project, as set forth in the certificate of approval. [PL 2019, c. 398, §11 (AMD).]

[PL 2019, c. 398, §11 (AMD).]

7. Bonds and notes under 1% of valuation. The regional school unit board may issue bonds or notes not to exceed 1% of the last preceding state valuation of all the municipalities within the regional school unit:

A. By calling a regional school unit meeting to approve the issuance of those bonds or notes; or [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. By passing a resolution to that effect, setting forth the amount of the proposed issue and the purposes for which the proceeds will be used and meeting the following requirements.

(1) The secretary of the regional school unit board shall, within 5 days of the date of the passage of the resolution, cause attested copies of the resolution to be posted in 3 public and conspicuous places within each of the municipalities within the regional school unit. The secretary shall make a return of the posting stating its time and place. The return must be kept with the records of the regional school unit, and a copy of the return must be mailed to each of the municipal officers of each municipality within the regional school unit.

(2) If, within 35 days of the date of the passage of the resolution, petitions with signatures of at least 10% of the residents in the regional school unit eligible to vote on the date that the resolution was adopted are filed with the secretary requesting a vote of the regional school unit to approve or disapprove the issuance of the bonds or notes, the secretary of the regional school unit board shall immediately notify the regional school unit board. The regional school unit board shall call a referendum for that purpose as set forth in this chapter.

(3) The regional school unit board may not authorize bonds or notes by resolution if the amount of the proposed issue, together with the amount of any other bonds or notes authorized solely by resolution and that are for the same purpose, exceeds 1% of the total of the last state valuation of all the participating municipalities. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2015, c. 181, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 398, §§10, 11 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 210, §2 (AMD).

§1491. Reserve fund

1. Establishment. A regional school unit may establish a reserve fund for school construction projects, financing the acquisition or reconstruction of a specific or type of capital improvement, financing the acquisition of a specific item or type of capital equipment or any of the expenditures listed under section 1485, subsection 1, paragraph A by including a request in the regional school unit budget, which must include a description of the purpose of the reserve fund, and receiving voter approval. The regional school unit board is the trustee of the reserve fund. The reserve fund must be deposited or invested by the treasurer of the regional school unit under the direction of the regional school unit board.

[PL 2019, c. 588, §4 (AMD).]

2. Deposit or investment. All regional school unit funds, including reserve funds and trust funds to the extent not prohibited by the terms of the instrument or vote creating the fund, must be deposited or invested by the treasurer of the regional school unit under the direction of the regional school unit board according to the requirements for the deposit or investment of municipal funds contained in Title 30-A, chapter 223, subchapter 3-A.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Expending money from reserve funds. The regional school unit board may expend the sum in the reserve fund when authorized to do so by a vote of the regional school unit at a regional school unit meeting or a regional school unit budget meeting when an article for that purpose is set out in the warrant calling the meeting, except that the regional school unit board may expend funds from a reserve fund by a vote of the board in accordance with the procedure in subsection 4:

A. In the event of an emergency that requires the immediate expenditure of funds and when, in responding to the emergency, a vote of the regional school unit for permission is cost-prohibitive; or [PL 2019, c. 588, §5 (NEW).]

B. When such an expenditure is required by law. [PL 2019, c. 588, §5 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 588, §5 (AMD).]

4. Procedure for expending money from reserve funds by vote of board. The procedure for the regional school unit board to expend funds from the reserve fund pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph A or B must be as follows.

A. The regional school unit board shall provide public notice of the regular or special meeting at which the vote to expend funds from the reserve fund will be taken. [PL 2019, c. 588, §6 (NEW).]

B. The regional school unit board shall hold a public hearing prior to the vote to expend funds from the reserve fund. [PL 2019, c. 588, §6 (NEW).]

C. The vote to expend funds from the reserve fund must be recorded in the meeting minutes of the regional school unit board. [PL 2019, c. 588, §6 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 588, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 588, §§4-6 (AMD).

§1492. Bid procedure

1. Written bids. Bids must be in writing, sealed with the outside envelope or wrapper plainly marked "Bid, not to be opened until (appropriate date)" and mailed to or filed with the superintendent. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Time of opening . A director on the regional school unit board or an employee of the regional school unit may not open a bid until the appointed time. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Public opening. At the time and place stated in the public notice, and open to the public, all bids must be opened by the superintendent or, in the superintendent's absence or disability, by any director designated for the purpose by the chair of the regional school unit board. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Reading. If any citizens who are not directors or employees of the regional school unit are present or if any representatives of the press are present, bids must at the time of opening either be made available for examination by them or must be read aloud in a manner to be heard plainly by those in attendance. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1493. Void contracts

A contract made by the regional school unit board during the term of a member who is pecuniarily interested in that contract, either directly or indirectly, is void, unless the regional school unit board has advertised for sealed bids for that contract and that advertisement for sealed bids has been published at least 5 days prior to the date set for closing of bids in a newspaper having general circulation within the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 5

REFERENDUM

§1501. Regional school unit referendum

1. Authority to call a regional school unit referendum. The regional school unit board shall initiate a regional school unit referendum:

- A. To approve the issuance of bonds or notes for school construction projects; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- B. To approve a change in the selection of a school building site; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- C. To authorize the regional school unit board to contract for the schooling of secondary pupils; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
- D. To accept or reject a prospective gift; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

E. To borrow funds for minor capital costs as defined in section 15672, subsection 20-A. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1502. Method of calling a regional school unit referendum

A regional school unit referendum must be initiated by a warrant prepared and signed by a majority of the regional school unit board directors. The warrant must be countersigned by the municipal officers in the municipality where the warrants are posted. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Municipal officers. The warrant must direct the municipal officers within the regional school unit to call a referendum on a date and time determined by the regional school unit board. A warrant must be prepared and distributed at least 30 days prior to the date of the referendum, except that a warrant for a regional school unit budget referendum held in accordance with this chapter must be prepared and distributed at least 14 days prior to the date of the referendum.

A. The warrant must be directed to a resident of the regional school unit by name, ordering the resident to notify the municipal officers of each of the municipalities within the regional school unit to call a town meeting or city election on the date specified by the regional school unit board. No other date may be used. The person who serves the warrant shall make a return on the warrant stating the manner of services and the time when it was given. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The warrant must be served on the municipal clerk of each of the municipalities within the regional school unit by delivery of an attested copy of the warrant in hand within 3 days of the date of the warrant. The municipal clerk, on receipt of the warrant, shall immediately notify the municipal officers within the municipality. The municipal officers shall forthwith meet, countersign and have the warrant posted. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. The warrants and other notices for the referendum must be in the same manner as provided in Title 21-A, except that the regional school unit board shall hold a public hearing at least 7 days before the referendum vote. At least 7 days before the public hearing, the regional school unit board shall give notice of the public hearing by having a copy of the proposed referendum, together with the time and place of hearing, posted in the same manner required for posting a warrant under this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Content of the warrant. The warrant must set forth the articles to be acted on in each municipal referendum. The articles must have the following form.

A. On or after July 1, 2008, when a referendum is called for the purpose of authorizing the issuance of bonds or notes for capital outlay purposes, the articles must be substantially as set out in this paragraph.

(1) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to issue bonds or notes in the name of this regional school unit for school construction purposes in an amount not to exceed \$..... to construct a (elementary or secondary school) to be located at..... (specifically defined lot where school is to be erected)?

Yes No"

(2) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to issue bonds or notes in the name of this regional school unit for school construction or minor capital

projects in an amount not to exceed \$..... for the purpose of
(purpose of school construction project)?

Yes No"

(3) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to use the bond issue or notes in an amount not to exceed \$....., which was voted by the regional school unit on (date), to construct a (elementary or secondary school) to be located at (specifically defined lot where school is to be located)?

Yes No"

(4) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to construct a (elementary or secondary school) to be located at (specifically defined lot where school is to be located) with the total project cost not to exceed \$..... and to issue bonds or notes in the name of this regional school unit for school construction purposes in an amount not to exceed \$..... with the balance of the total project costs to be derived from (description of other sources of funds such as initial state share when approved for current fiscal year funding, proceeds from insured losses, money from federal sources, other noneducational funds, etc.)

Yes No" [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. When a regional school unit votes to change the site of its school construction project using the article in paragraph A, subparagraph (3), the date of authorization of the project is the original date the voters authorized the regional school unit board to issue bonds or notes for that project. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. On or after July 1, 2008, when a referendum is called for the purpose of authorizing the regional school unit board to contract for the schooling of secondary pupils, the article must be as set out in this paragraph.

(1) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to contract in the name of this regional school unit with (name of regional school unit or private school) for the schooling of secondary pupils for a term of years?

Yes No" [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. On or after July 1, 2008, when a referendum is called for the purpose of accepting or rejecting a prospective gift, the article must be as set out in this paragraph.

(1) "Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to accept a prospective gift under the following conditions?(terms and conditions).

Yes No" [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1503. Referendum procedures

1. **Ballots.** The regional school unit board shall prepare and furnish the required number of ballots for carrying out the referendum as posted, including absentee ballots. The regional school unit board shall prepare and furnish all other materials necessary to fulfill the requirements for voting procedures. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. **Voting.** Voting must be held and conducted in accordance with this subsection.

A. The voting at referenda held in towns must be held and conducted in accordance with Title 30-A, sections 2524 and 2528 to 2532, even though the town has not accepted the provisions of Title 30-A, sections 2524 and 2525. The facsimile signature of the clerk under Title 30-A, section 2528, subsection 6, paragraph F must be that of the chair of the regional school unit board. If a regional school unit referendum is called to be held simultaneously with any statewide election, the voting in towns must be held and conducted in accordance with Title 21-A, except that the duties of the Secretary of State must be performed by the regional school unit board and, if the statewide election is a primary election, any registered voter may vote in the referendum. The absentee voting procedure of Title 21-A must be used, except that the duties of the Secretary of State must be performed by the regional school unit board. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. The voting at referenda in cities must be held and conducted in accordance with Title 21-A, including the absentee voting procedure, except that the duties of the Secretary of State must be performed by the regional school unit board and, if the statewide election is a primary election, any registered voter may vote in the referendum. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Return and counting. The return and counting of votes must be in accordance with this subsection.

A. The municipal clerk shall, within 24 hours of the determination of the results of the vote in the municipality, certify and send to the regional school unit board the total number of votes cast in the affirmative and in the negative on each article. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. As soon as all of the results from all of the municipalities have been returned to the regional school unit board, the regional school unit board shall meet and compute the total number of votes cast in all of the municipalities within the regional school unit in the affirmative and in the negative on each article. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. If the regional school unit board determines that there were more votes cast in the affirmative than in the negative on a given article, it shall declare that the article has passed. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. If the regional school unit board determines that the total number of votes cast on an article in the affirmative is equal to or less than those cast in the negative, it shall declare that the article has not passed. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

E. The regional school unit board shall enter its declaration and computations in its records and send certified copies to the clerk of each municipality within the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1504. Reconsideration

The procedure to reconsider votes taken at a regional school unit referendum is as set out in this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Time limit. The regional school unit board shall, within 60 days, initiate a new regional school unit referendum to reconsider the vote of the previous referendum if, within 7 days of the first referendum, at least 10% of the number of voters voting for the gubernatorial candidates in the last gubernatorial election in the municipalities within the regional school unit petition to reconsider a prior regional school unit referendum vote.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Required quorum. A reconsideration referendum is not valid unless the number of persons voting in that referendum is at least equal to the number who voted in the prior regional school unit referendum.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Bond. If the margin of the vote being reconsidered was between 10% and 25%, the petitioners shall post a bond with the petition equal to the actual and reasonable costs of the new referendum. If the margin of the vote being reconsidered exceeded 25%, the petitioners shall post an additional bond equal to the actual and reasonable costs that may be incurred as a result of the delay of an authorization or approval granted in the prior regional school unit referendum. If the petitioners are successful, the bonds must be canceled.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1505. Bonds; notes; other

All bonds, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued for regional school unit purposes by a regional school unit for major capital expenses, bus purchases or current operating expenses, including tax or other revenue anticipation notes, are general obligations of the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

1. Tax assessments. The municipal officers or regional school unit board shall require the sums that are necessary to meet in full the principal of and interest on the bonds, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued pursuant to this section payable in each year to be assessed and collected in the manner provided by law for the assessment and collection of taxes.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. Reduction. The sums to be assessed and collected under subsection 1 must be reduced by the amount of an allocation of funds appropriated by the Legislature to pay the principal and interest owed by the regional school unit in a given year as certified to the regional school unit by the commissioner. The commissioner shall certify the amount due to the regional school unit within 30 days of its appropriation by the Legislature.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. Collection. After assessment and reduction under subsection 2, the remaining sum must be paid from ad valorem taxes, which may be levied without limit as to rate or amount upon all the taxable property within the regional school unit.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).

§1506. Debt liability

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Existing debt" means any bond, note, loan agreement, lease-purchase agreement or other debt instrument issued prior to July 1st of the first operational year of the new unit for the purposes of funding public schools and career and technical education regions, or for refinancing such debt, that remains outstanding at the time of a reorganization pursuant to this chapter. "Existing debt" does not include routine payables or commercial contract obligations. [PL 2007, c. 668, §22 (AMD).]

B. "Original education unit" means:

- (1) A previous education unit that has existing debt;
- (2) A municipality that has existing debt incurred on behalf of a previous education unit; or
- (3) A previous education unit within a career and technical education region as defined by section 8301-A that has existing debt. [PL 2007, c. 668, §23 (AMD).]

C. "New unit" means a regional school unit created or established pursuant to this chapter. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 668, §22, 23 (AMD).]

2. Liability remains with original unit. Existing debt held by an original education unit remains the obligation of that original education unit after reorganization pursuant to this chapter. An original education unit may not be finally dissolved while any existing debt held by the original education unit remains outstanding. All aspects of an original education unit's administrative or political organization may be merged into a new unit or otherwise modified to accomplish the purposes of this chapter but its existing debt and its right to secure payment of such debt from income streams that existed at the time of the issuance of such debt may not be affected or altered except as authorized by this section.

A. A new unit may agree to pay the existing debt of an original education unit that is included within the new unit. If the new unit pays the existing debt, the original education unit is relieved of paying that debt, but, in the event that the new unit fails to pay any amount of the existing debt, the original education unit remains responsible for the deficiency. The original education unit shall ensure that timely payments of existing debt are made, regardless of whether the new unit has agreed to make the debt payments. An original education unit may contract with a new unit for the administration of, transfer or delegate to and a new unit may accept and exercise on behalf of the original education unit for the remaining term of any existing debt all those powers and duties reasonable and necessary for the payment of existing debt of the original education unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or any provision of any trust agreement, a new unit may use any sinking fund or other money set aside by the original education unit to pay an existing debt to pay that debt. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. A new unit may issue bonds or other debt instruments for the purpose of refinancing or retiring the existing debt of an original education unit. The issuance of such bonds or other debt must be in accordance with applicable procedural requirements, including the procedural requirements of section 1490. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. No impact on state debt subsidies. A change in any administrative or political organization resulting from the creation of a new unit may not affect any state subsidy with respect to existing debt or the relative portion of any such debt paid or reimbursed by the State except as provided in this subsection.

A. The original education unit may continue to pay its existing debt obligations in due course as though no new unit had been created and its choice to do so may not reduce or otherwise affect the level of state assistance or subsidy with respect to that existing debt. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If the original education unit and the new unit choose to refinance the existing debt, the state subsidy or assistance with respect to the debt must be determined as of the date of the new issuance and must be based on that refinancing and not on any previous subsidy or assistance calculation related to the existing debt. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Debt of original education units. After July 1st of the first operational year of the new unit for each original education unit with existing debt that has reorganized into a new unit, if the new unit has not agreed to assume liability to pay that existing debt, the regional school unit board shall serve as agent for purposes of that existing debt and has full authority to:

- A. Sue and be sued in the name of the original education unit with respect to the existing debt; [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]
- B. Determine the debt service due each fiscal year on any existing debt; [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]
- C. As applicable, allocate to each member of the original education unit the member's share of the annual debt service for the existing debt of the original education unit in addition to each member's share of costs of the new unit; [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]
- D. Collect the allocation for debt service on the existing debt from the original education unit or, as applicable, from each member of the original education unit in addition to each member's share of costs of the new unit; [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]
- E. Pay the debt service on the existing debt of the original education unit when due; and [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]
- F. Take all other actions necessary and proper with respect to the existing debt. [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]

Allocations between members of the original education unit to pay the debt service for the existing debt must be made on the basis of the cost-sharing formula of the original education unit in effect on July 1, 2007, as applied to the year of allocation. In the case of state-subsidized debt service, the provisions of subsection 3 apply. Amounts to pay the debt service on the existing debt of the original education units must be included in the budget that the regional school unit board of a new unit submits for approval. If the original education unit is divided between different new units that have not agreed to assume liability to pay the existing debt, the commissioner shall require that the reorganization plan of one of those new units provide for that new unit to serve as agent for purposes of the existing debt of the original education unit. That new unit, as agent, has the authority provided by this subsection, except that the new unit shall notify the other new units containing members of the original education unit of the amounts they must assess and collect from their members who were members of the original education unit, and those other new units shall perform the functions in paragraphs C and D with respect to their members, and shall pay the appropriate amounts over to the new unit serving as agent. [PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (RPR).]

5. Bonds to complete school construction and renovation. If the legislative body of an original education unit has authorized the issuance of bonds for a school construction project or a minor capital project, but that original education unit has not yet issued all of the authorized permanent bonds for that project, the board of the new unit that includes all the members of the original education unit shall issue bonds or notes necessary to finance the completion of that project and to refund temporary notes that the original education unit issued in anticipation of permanent bonds for that project. No further action by the legislative body of the new unit is required. The bonds at any time outstanding for the project may not exceed the amount authorized by the legislative body of the original education unit except to the extent necessary to refund temporary notes on a current basis. Bonds or notes issued by the regional school unit board to complete projects of an original education unit and to refund temporary project notes of an original education unit must be issued in the name of the original education unit and otherwise must be in the form and be subject to the procedural requirements provided by section 1490 except as provided by this subsection. Upon issuing debt in accordance with this subsection, the regional school unit board shall serve as agent of the original education unit for purposes of that debt and has the same authority as is provided in subsection 4 for existing debt. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §§22-24 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 695, Pt. A, §22 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 691, Pt. A, §18 (AMD).

SUBCHAPTER 6

SCHOOLS

§1511. Supermajority vote to close school in the regional school unit

A school operated within the regional school unit may not be closed for lack of need unless closure of the school is approved at a regular or special meeting of the regional school unit board by an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the elected membership or voting power of those serving on the regional school unit board at the time of the vote. A regional school unit must proceed in accordance with section 1512 for elementary schools or for secondary schools if the regional school unit has more than one secondary school. For regional school units with only one member municipality, section 1512 does not apply and the regional school unit must proceed in accordance with section 4102, subsection 4, paragraph B-1. [PL 2011, c. 678, Pt. K, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 171, §4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 678, Pt. K, §1 (AMD).

§1512. Closing school

1. **Vote; cost of election.** A school in a member municipality of a regional school unit may not be closed unless the voters in the member municipality vote on the article in accordance with the referendum procedure set forth in this chapter.

"Article: Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to close (name of school)?

Yes No

The additional cost of keeping the school open has been estimated by the regional school unit board to be \$"

The election must be conducted within that member municipality only, pursuant to department rule, and the costs of the election are borne by the regional school unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

2. **Expense of keeping the school open.** If the voters vote by a majority vote to keep the school open, the member municipality is liable for some additional expense for actual local operating costs and transportation operating costs as defined in section 15672. The determination of costs is subject to the approval of the commissioner. The cost to be borne by the municipality voting to keep a school open is the amount that would be saved if the school were closed. Any additional costs that must be borne by the member municipality must be part of the article presented to the voters at the meeting to determine whether the school should remain open. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

3. **Costs and procedures during subsequent years.** During any year subsequent to the year during which a school remains open contrary to the regional school unit board's vote to close that school as a result of a municipal referendum, the school will be open without any additional cost to the municipality except as described in paragraphs A and B.

A. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality again vote to keep the school open, as described in this subsection, then the school will remain open and the member municipality will be obligated to pay the additional costs as described in subsection 2. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality fail to vote to keep the school open, then the school is closed. In this event, the school may be reopened only if the regional school unit board votes to reopen the school. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Definition of school closing. For purposes of this section, a school closing is any action by the regional school unit board that has the effect of providing no instruction for any students at that school. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

5. Method of payment by liable municipality. If a municipality is liable for additional expenses as determined in subsection 3, paragraph A, then the amount of this additional expense must be subtracted from the regional school unit budget before each member municipality's assessment is computed. This additional expense must be paid by the member municipality that is liable in equal monthly amounts, unless the regional school unit and that member municipality mutually agree to another method of payment.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

6. Multiple municipalities. If a school proposed for closure is a school that serves students from more than one municipality, the article set forth in subsection 1 must be submitted to the voters in each of the municipalities that sent all students from that municipality to the school. If a majority of the voters in each of the municipalities vote to keep the school open, the school is not closed and the municipalities share in the costs under this section in the same proportion as they share the current operating costs of the school.

[PL 2009, c. 213, Pt. OOOO, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 668, §25 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 213, Pt. OOOO, §1 (AMD).

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