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Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Convene a Stakeholders Group To Analyze the School Funding Formula

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the school funding formula that provides for state aid to local public education is inequitable; and

Whereas, the school funding formula is responsible for unjustified funding shifts from many communities to other communities; and

Whereas, it is necessary to rectify this inequity as soon as possible; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Stakeholders group. Resolved: That the Department of Education shall convene a stakeholders group to analyze the school funding formula. The stakeholders group must include participation of the Maine School Superintendents Association, the Maine Principals' Association, the Maine Education Association, special education experts, the University of Maine and members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate and members from the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Department of Education shall submit an analysis plan and a proposed timeline to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by May 1, 2009; and be it further

Sec. 2 Issues to review. Resolved: That the stakeholders group convened under section 1 shall identify:

1. The funding shifts caused by the school funding formula; and
2. How the funding shifts identified in subsection 1 support overall educational excellence and affect disadvantaged segments of the public education system by using as guides the Maine Educational Assessment results, annual yearly performance data and high-performing school analysis as well as other data selected by the Department of Education for rural and urban schools; and be it further

Sec. 3 Report. Resolved: That the Department of Education shall submit a report with its recommended changes to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by November 1, 2009. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may submit legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature based on the report.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Education to convene a stakeholders group to analyze the school funding formula. The department must present a plan and timeline to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by May 1, 2009 and a report with its recommendations by November 1, 2009. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may submit legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature.