

Maine

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FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR P-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Governor Janet T. Mills presented a budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 that would “[make] a historic investment in Maine public schools and [meet] the State’s obligation to pay 55 percent of the cost of K-12 education for the first time in Maine’s history.”¹ About one week later, the act to meet the obligation of paying 55 percent of education costs failed in the legislature.² Alternatively, consistent with the Commissioner’s School Funding Recommendation for FY 2021 presented to the Maine State Board of Education,³ “a minimum teacher salary of \$37,500 for school year 2022”⁴ passed at the statehouse, thrusting Career and Technical Education teachers forward in the minimum \$40,000 salary initiative.⁵ In the latest regular legislative session, constituents prioritized academic gains. The state department has been directed to analyze funding to address student achievement gaps.⁶

CHANGES TO THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR P-12 EDUCATION

Part foundation formula and part resource-allocation (EPS), Maine’s funding structure continues to be a work in progress. Although the explicit pursuit of providing for “equitable funding” at the statehouse was unsuccessful,⁷ the legislature recognized the need to stabilize student enrollment count in the school funding formula.⁸ Language addressed how to calculate student enrollment for specific districts, detailing that if enrollment was the same or increased, to average the two most recent years; and that if enrollment decreased greater than 10%, to average the last three most recent years.

1. State of Maine Office of Governor Janet T. Mills. (2021). *Governor Mills unveils part two budget proposal with historic investment in Maine schools, achieving 55 percent of education costs for first time in Maine history*. Office of Governor Janet T. Mills. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-unveils-part-two-budget-proposal-historic-investment-maine-schools-achieving-55>

2. L.D. 914, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

3. Maine Department of Education. (n.d.). *FY 2021-2022 Funding Details, MSSA FY2022 Budget Development Presentation*. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/gpa/eps/21-22>; Long, C. (2019). *\$40K minimum salary: A big win for Maine teachers, and the profession*. Education Votes. Retrieved from <https://educationvotes.nea.org/2019/12/19/40k-minimum-salary-a-big-win-for-maine-teachers-and-the-profession>

4. Ibid.

5. L.D. 1188, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

6. L.D. 281, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

7. L.D. 1426, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

8. L.D. 651, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

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Explicit language addresses the inclusion of the counts of students enrolled in alternative education programs.

PRESSING STATE ISSUES AFFECTING P-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The Governor has continued the use of federal funding to increase broadband internet connection across the state. To date, the initiative has “secure[d] mobile hotspots and learning devices for nearly 24,000 students across Maine after schools suspended in-classroom instruction and adopted remote learning earlier this year.”⁹ Additionally, the state department was able to secure “over \$2 million in pilot implementation funding for Maine schools that have created innovative pilot programs as part of the Rethinking Remote Education Ventures (RREV) project.”¹⁰

EXCLUSIVE TO P-12

Maine offers a variety of education options like Charter, Magnet, and Private Non-Sectarian/Sectarian/Special Purpose choices.¹¹ The legislature determined that private schools that enroll 60 percent or more publicly funding students should meet certain requirements.¹²

A recently passed bill directed the state department to report on charter school funding methods and reporting protocols.¹³

STATE PER-PUPIL EXPENDITURES¹⁴

\$14,943.43

9. State of Maine Office of Governor Janet T. Mills. (2021). *Governor Mills praises federal investment of more than \$128 million to EXPAND broadband in Maine*. Office of Governor Janet T. Mills. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-praises-federal-investment-more-128-million-expand-broadband-maine-2021-09-03>

10. Maine Department of Education. (2021). *Media Release: Maine DOE Announces Over \$2M in First Round of Innovative RREV Pilot Awards*. Maine DOE Newsroom. Retrieved from <https://mainedoenews.net/2021/08/04/media-release-maine-doe-announces-over-2m-in-first-round-of-innovative-rrev-pilot-awards>

11. EdChoice. (2021). *School Choice in Maine*. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/state/maine>

12. L.D. 1672, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

13. L.D. 604, 130th Leg., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Me. 2021).

14. FY 2020; Maine Department of Education. (n.d.). *Resident Expenditures by Budget Category - FY2020 (2019-2020) Per Pupil Amounts*. Retrieved from https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/inline-files/FY2020ResidentExpenditure_PerPupilUpdate1.pdf

ALLOCATION OF STATE DOLLARS¹⁵

\$2,659,601,771.41

PERCENT OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR P-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION¹⁶

FY 2021 (DOE General Fund) - \$1,469,563,180/ 10,198,664,319 (about 14.4%)

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15. FY 2020; Maine Department of Education. (n.d.). *Resident Expenditures by Budget Category - FY2020 (2019-2020) Total Amounts*. Retrieved from https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/FY2020ResidentExpenditure_TotalExpenditureUpdate1.pdf

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