



MAINE

Description of the Formula

Beginning in 2005-06, Maine's school funding formula became an adequacy-based formula entitled Essential Programs and Services. Using a cost analysis, the State establishes the amount, level and cost of education components needed in each school to ensure all students had equitable opportunities to achieve proficiency in state learning standards. The essential programs and services allocation calculated for each depends upon student, staff and school characteristics, resulting in unique EPS foundation operating cost rates for each LEA.

By statute, the State share percentage of the total EPS foundation operating costs is 55%. Local share for each LEA is calculated based on property valuation, and local communities may choose to raise more than its required EPS foundation operating costs. The State subsidizes 100% of approved EPS special education costs for most school district, and up to 30% for minimum subsidy receiving districts.

District-Based Components

Density/Sparsity of Small Schools

Additional State subsidies are provided to geographically isolated schools, , and island schools.

Grade Level Differences

The number of staff approved for PreK-8 and 9-12 grade spans vary depending upon EPS established ratios and costs, which result in different EPS allocations based on grade span and district size for each LEA, and different levels of State subsidizable funds provided each LEA.

Declining Enrollment or Growth

Adjustments for declining enrollment are provided depending on the decline resulting from the difference from the average of the two most recent census counts to the average of the six most recent census counts.

Capital Outlay and/or Debt Service

All expenditures for school construction that are approved by the State Board of Education are subsidized by the State.

Transportation

The total subsidized transportation operating funds for each LEA is calculated on a funding formula that reflects LEA student density and miles traveled each year. Additional adjustments are provided for island schools, out-of-district special education costs and ferry services.

Charter Schools

School administrative units must forward the student's allocations to the approved public charter school the students choose to attend.

Student-Based Components

Special Education

The State subsidizes 100% of approved Essential Programs and Services special education costs for all non-minimum subsidy receiving school districts.

Low Income / Comp Ed / At-Risk

The State provides additional subsidies for all children eligible for free or reduced lunches in each LEA based on a 1.15 pupil weighting.

English Language Learner/Bilingual Education

The State provides additional subsidies for all ESL children base on weightings 1.525-1.70, depending upon the number of eligible children in each LEA.

Gifted and Talented Education

The State subsidizes approved EPS gifted and talented costs.

Career and Technical Education

The State subsidizes approved EPS career and technical education costs.

Preschool Education

The State provides additional subsidies for public preschool program children base on a 1.10 pupil weighting.

Other

Does not apply.

Revenue and Expenditure Information

State Mandates Restricting Revenue or Expenditure Increases

Does not apply.

Property Assessment Ratios Used/Legal Standards for Property Assessment

Each municipality is responsible for annually assessing its property, either by individually assessing parcels of property or by increasing the prior year's assessment of each parcel by some common factor. The sum of the resulting assessments are required to be no less than 70% of the just value of, or full market value of, this combined property. Each municipality's valuation posed in the school funding is first equalized to estimate full market value of the property in the municipality.

Measure of Local Ability To Support Schools

Property valuation per pupil as computed by the state tax assessor to estimate full market value.

The resulting full value property valuation is multiplied by a statewide mill rate to determine the amount of support required by local communities. Beginning in 2014-15, the average of two year's full value property valuation will be multiplied by a statewide mill rate to determine the amount of support required by local communities.

School District Budget and Tax Rate Procedures/Sources of Local Revenue

Districts (serving two or more municipalities) are fiscally independent. The budget is approved at an annual district meeting by voters of the participating municipalities. Following budget approval each member municipality is assessed its share. Single municipality school administrative units develop a budget, which must be approved by the legislative body (which may be elected representatives or the voters). Beginning in 2007-08 all budgets must be approved by local communities by a referendum vote. In all cases, the tax rate for each municipality is set by its legislative body. Local revenues include property tax and miscellaneous revenues.

State Support for Nonpublic Schools

Does not apply.

Source: Dr. David Silvernail, University of Southern Maine and Suzan C. Beaudoin, Director of School Finance & Operations, Maine Department of Education.