



Leading the Way to Great Public Schools for Every Maine Student

**Governor's Budget Proposal Slashes School Funding Again, Ignores Will of Voters
*Analysis shows Governor's proposal drops direct school funding down to '08-'09 levels while giving huge tax breaks to the wealthy***

After a closer look at the Governor's proposed budget, the Maine Education Association, which represents teachers and support staff across the state conducted a careful analysis and what the proposal means for public schools, in terms of funding. Below are the key findings.

Key facts on the impact to education under the Governor's 2017-18 budget proposal:

- Direct funding to local school districts will decrease by nearly \$23.4 million.
- The state contribution of funding is just about even with what it was in 2008-09 (\$983 million vs. \$991 million now). In order for the state contribution to have the same purchasing power as it did in 2008-09, the state contribution would need to be increased by nearly \$100 million to \$1,087,760,198.
- The Governor's budget proposal circumvents democracy by ignoring the will of the voters; it eliminates the language in the voter approved Question 2 that requires the surcharge revenue to be deposited into the Fund to Advance Public Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education to be used for direct support for student learning, as voters mandated.
- The Governor's proposed budget moves the state further away from the 55% commitment to state funding for schools, approved by voters more than ten years ago. The Governor's proposal reduces the state share to fund education down to 46.8%, down from last year's budget of 47.1%. This reduction will once again shift the cost of public education onto the backs of local property taxpayers. (see graph)
- The Governor's budget proposal gives Augusta more control of our schools by pushing teachers into a statewide teacher contract.

Statement from Rob Walker, MEA Executive Director

"Governor LePage's budget is reckless, and if adopted, will decimate our public schools, hurt Maine students and ignore the will of Maine voters. The Governor is playing games with the will of the people, and sending a message to Maine students that their education isn't important enough to fund. Maine can't afford to cut income taxes for our wealthiest while we cut programs that help our students succeed."

"Mainers were clear at the ballot box when they voted to stand up for students and support Question 2, the ballot question that better funds our schools while creating an additional tax on Maine's wealthiest citizens. The Governor's proposal completely ignores the will of the voters by changing the language in the law created by Question 2. Maine people spoke, and their voices shouldn't be stifled because Governor LePage chooses to ignore the democratic process. The MEA, along with its 24,000 members, are prepared to fight for our students, and uphold the will of voters; it is our responsibility to make sure our schools are properly funded so we can help our children receive an education that sets them up for success in the future."

“Once again, the Governor is playing a shell game with the state's finances, shirking its responsibility and shifting costs on to the local taxpayer hurting our poorer communities more than those who are fortunate to live in the “right” zip code. The chance for a child’s success should not depend on living in the “right” zip code. No matter how you look at it, this budget proposal moves the state further away from its mandate to fund 55% of the total cost of education; it is wrong for Maine, wrong for our students and must be rejected.”

