

# Q&A on LD 1932, the "Damon Amendment" and School Unions

## Q: What is a School Union?

A: A School Union is a form of regional organization in which several communities each have their own schools & school committees but share a superintendent and possibly other central office functions. Under the school consolidation law enacted last session, School Unions will no longer be an allowable form of school governance.

## Q: How does the "Damon Amendment" to LD 1932 address the School Union issue?

A: The Damon Amendment would allow School Unions to remain a viable option for school governance, but with two important changes from their current form:

- School Unions would be required to meet the same minimum size requirements as Municipal Districts and RSUs (they must serve at least 2,500 students, or 1,200 if merited by geography, etc.) *Currently, the average School Union serves 823 students, with the largest at 2,856 students and the smallest at 45 students.*
- School Unions would be required to consolidate more functions into a single central office. Member communities would have to consolidate not only superintendent services, but also all business functions, transportation administration, curriculum coordination, special education services, and all state and federal reporting.

## Q: Are School Unions more expensive than other forms of school governance?

A: While it is true that on average, members of School Unions spend more per pupil, *there is no evidence that School Union governance itself is the cause.* In fact, per-pupil spending varies widely among School Unions, just as it does among Municipal Districts and SADs. ***The most important factor isn't governance, it's local property valuation.***

### **Some School Unions spend BELOW the state average**

School Union 42 (Manchester, Mount Vernon, Readfield, Wayne)

\$8985/pupil

School Union 90 (Alton, Bradley, Greenbush, Milford)

\$9238/pupil

School Union 52 (China, Vassalboro, Winslow)

\$9432/pupil

**STATE AVERAGE**

**\$9788/pupil**

### **Some School Unions spend ABOVE the state average**

School Union 47 (Arrowsic\*, Georgetown\*, Phippsburg\*, West Bath, Woolwich)

\$10,257/pupil

School Union 93 (Blue Hill\*, Brooksville\*, Castine\*, Penobscot)

\$11,616/pupil

School Union 98 (Bar Harbor\*, Cranberry Isles\*, Frenchboro\*, Mount Desert\*, Southwest Harbor\*, Tremont\*)

\$13,727/pupil

\* = Minimum receiver of state aid