



MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

23 State House Station
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

STATE OF MAINE

The State Board of Education held a regular monthly meeting on March 8, 2023 at the Burton Cross State Office Building and virtually via Zoom. The following members were present: Chair Fern Desjardins; Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau; Kristin Bishop; James Ford; Wilson Hess; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; Ryan Hafener; and Joshua Leinwand.

Absent with Excuse: Wendy Ault

Others Present: Deputy Commissioner Daniel Chuhta; Michael Perry, Acting Director of the Office of Higher Education; Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs; Dr. Constance Brown; Scott Annear; Mark Conrad; AlLee Cookson; Lisa Sawin; and Sandra Bourget, State Board of Education Secretary Specialist.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

Roll call was taken by Chair Desjardins. The chair declared a quorum present.

VISION STATEMENT:

Read by student member, Ryan Hafener: The vision of the Maine State Board of Education is that all students will receive a high-quality education leading to graduation with the skills, knowledge, and principles to be prepared for future learning, careers, and life.

POEM READING:

Poem Read by Victoria Kornfield – “*Snow Day*” by Billy Collins.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

No Adjustments to the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Kristin Bishop, seconded by Paulette Bonneau, and voted six in favor, one abstention (Thomas Keller) to accept the February 8, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion is adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment

OFFICER’S REPORTS:

Chair, Fern Desjardins

➤ **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

- Edmond Morin was appointed to the Career & Technical Education Committee.
- Fern testified at the joint meeting of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee with the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee for the public hearing of L.D. 258 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025 (the biennial budget). She also attended the work session.
- She worked with Kristin on testimony in support of L.D. 280 An Act to Make Maine Schools Safer and Healthier by Increasing the Maximum Debt Service Limit. Kristin delivered the testimony to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee and feedback from her presentation has been extremely positive.
- Orientation with the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs went very well with Paulette, Wendy and Ryan joining Fern. They provided general information about the State Board and then focused their presentation on the Board’s strategic plan and milestones accomplished in 2022.
- Fern and Paulette attended the “Critical Issues in Education & Workforce Policy Breakfast” sponsored by Educate Maine on February 9. Legislators

included Speaker of the House Rep. Rachel Talbot Ross and House Republican Leader Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham. Panel discussions on *Developing Learners Across Maine's Education Pipeline* and *Building a Bridge Between Education and Employment* were very interesting.

- Board packets contain a letter from Patrick Manuel, superintendent of RSU 1. The letter was discussed at the February 24 meeting of the School Construction Committee. Superintendent Manuel and MSAD 33 Superintendent Benjamin Sirois were invited to attend the March 31 meeting of the School Construction Committee.
- The MEPRI Steering Committee met on March 6. Janet Fairman and Amy Johnson provided updates on the five topics in the FY23 Workplan and began a discussion to generate ideas for the FY24 Workplan.

NASBE

- Both the Executive Committee and Finance and Audit Committee met in February. The Executive Committee reviewed updates on the Legislative Conference, NASBE finances and staffing, publications, Office Hours, and technical assistance to members. The Finance and Audit Committee reviewed the FY2022 closing report, FY2023 budget update, plans for the 2023 audit, and 2024 dues proposals.
- Office Hours - *Educators Thriving* shared their survey to help schools and districts track factors of educator well-being, insights on what they are learning about educator well-being, and ways states can support local efforts. States had an opportunity to share information on educator well-being and retention.

Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- Paulette participated in the Career & Technical Education Committee meetings regarding the Perkins Targeted Reserve Grant allocation.
- On February 9, 2023, she testified in front of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on LD 33 An Act to Expand Access to Career and Technical Education Opportunities for Middle School Students. This bill is directly related to our Strategic Plan for CTE.
- Legislative Action Committee met on February 10 and February 17, 2023. Wendy is submitting testimony on LD 67 An Act to Increase the Number of Educational Professionals by Accepting Out-of-state Certification. Fern has attended work sessions and testified on LD 206 An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 (EMERGENCY)

(GOVERNOR'S BILL) (Supplemental Budget).

Wilson has prepared testimony for LD 436 An Act to Provide Career and Technical Education Students with Credit Toward High School Graduation for Work Completed in Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions.

Fern is providing testimony for LD 617 An Act to Foster Career and Technical Education in Maine Schools by Creating an Additional Pathway to Certify Industrial Arts Teachers.

- She attended the agenda review meeting with Chair Desjardins and Deputy Commissioner Chuhta.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

The School Construction Committee met on February 24, 2023 via Zoom.

- A revised Concept Approval for Auburn School Department's Edward Little High School Construction Project will be taken up under New Business.
- Discussion continued on ideas and options to reduce moveable equipment budgets and encourage the use of existing district owned equipment in future Major Capital Construction Projects.
- The Committee agreed to invite the superintendents of RSU 1 and MSAD 33 to the next School Construction Committee meeting to discuss the fires that destroyed their schools.
- Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs, provided an update on the school building inventory project. The software platform should be ready by June.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

Certification and Higher Education (Wendy Ault):

No report for this committee.

Career and Technical Education (Wilson Hess):

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee met on February 16, 2023.

- Wilson thanked Chair Desjardins for the appointment of Edmond Morin to the committee.

- Reviewed Perkins Fund and Briggs Fund balances year to date.
- Received reports from Dwight Littlefield, State Director of CTE; Mercedes Pour, Maine Community College System; Dave Keaton, MACTE; and Jason Judd, Educate Maine.
- Discovered when reviewing our Strategic Plan milestones that we had not fulfilled one related to MEPRI on ELOs. We distributed a MEPRI report on ELOs, had some discussion, and made future plans.
- Discussed the disposition of Perkins Targeted Reserve Grant Funds for FY 23. The committee has a recommendation under New Business on how to disperse those funds.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2023.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

The Legislative Action Committee meets every Friday at noon.

- Fern Desjardins will chair the meeting on March 10, 2023.
- We have been watching several bills. There hasn't been a lot of activity with new bills coming out or language to go with them.
- Fern will testify on LD 617. We will be submitting testimony on LD 436, and Wendy Ault is preparing written testimony on LD 67.

Student Voices (Joshua Leinwand and Ryan Hafener):

The Student Voices Committee met on March 6, 2023.

- Discussed LD 749 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide a New Dormitory Facility at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and decided not to provide testimony.
- Discussed student leadership on the board and would like to make a presentation at a future meeting.
- Attended the Student Engagement Collaborative with NASBE and will be meeting monthly.
- They are preparing for a Student Cabinet Meeting.
- Joshua had an interview with Paolo DeMaria from NASBE, an Eastern representative from Connecticut, and an Eastern representative from D.C. The conversation was about “The Future of High Schools”, and it will appear in the next issue of The State Education Standard.
- Ryan will be a speaker on a panel at NASBE’s Legislative Conference. The panel is titled *Empowering Student Leaders on State Boards of Education*.

Board Effectiveness (Paulette Bonneau):

The Board Effectiveness Committee met on February 27, 2023.

- The main topic of discussion was expanding student representation on the Student Membership Committee. It will remain the same at this point, but we will entertain recommendations from the chair going forward.
- Encouraged students to testify on bills that interest them.

The next meeting will be held on March 27, 2023.

Student Membership Committee (Edmond Morin):

The Student Membership Committee will meet in March of 2023.

- The date for applying has been extended from March 1, 2023 to March 10, 2023.
- Applications can now be accepted either digitally or hardcopy.
- Updated materials have been sent digitally to public high schools in the first Congressional District.
- Rachel Paling sent out an updated press release.
- The committee will be meeting soon to review the applications and then interview six candidates.

Charter Commission Representatives (Wilson Hess):

The Charter School Commission will meet on March 14, 2023.

- Received a report from the School Performance Committee. They supported a request from MCA to increase their enrollment.
- The Finance Committee reported on commission staffing through many transitions.
- Received a report from the Interim Executive Director Search Committee. They have interviewed candidates.
- The Performance Assessment Committee heard from NWEA and they said our “meets” criteria is set too high. They are in discussion on this topic.

Professional Standards Board (Thomas Keller):

The Professional Standards Board (PSB) met on February 13, 2023.

- Only 8 of the 23 committee members were able to attend the meeting.

- Of the 8 committee members who attended, all of their terms on the board have expired.
- We continue to move forward in the work of elevating the profession, identifying barriers, and increasing induction.

UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS:

No Unfinished Business

NEW BUSINESS:

REQUEST APPROVAL TO ALLOCATE MAINE CARL D. PERKINS TARGETED RESERVE GRANT FUNDS AS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (P. L. 115-224).

BACKGROUND: The State Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Committee recommends to the State Board of Education to carry forward FY23 Perkins V targeted reserve funds into the FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) award year to fund a forthcoming project to support the CTE strategic priorities within the State Board of Education's Strategic Plan. Funds will be awarded to Maine's secondary CTE eligible recipients.

- FY23 Perkins V targeted reserve grant funds to be carried forward is \$383,958.

Funds will be used in accordance with section 112 (c) of the Perkins V Act and will supplement and not supplant current resources. The committee reviews proposals to make recommendations for the approval of programs to enhance career and technical education to the State Board of Education.

RECOMMENDATION: The State Board of Education approve to carry forward FY23 Perkins V targeted reserve funds into the FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) award year to fund a forthcoming project to support the CTE strategic priorities within the State Board of Education's Strategic Plan. Funds will be awarded to Maine's secondary CTE eligible recipients.

MOTION by Wilson Hess, seconded by Edmond Morin, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education approve to carry forward

FY23 Perkins V targeted reserve funds into the FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) award year to fund a forthcoming project to support the CTE strategic priorities within the State Board of Education's Strategic Plan. Funds will be awarded to Maine's secondary CTE eligible recipients. The motion is adopted.

MAJOR CAPITAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM; REVISED CONCEPT APPROVAL CONSIDERATION; AUBURN SCHOOL DEPARTMENT-NEW EDWARD LITTLE HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

STATEMENT OF FACT: Superintendent Dr. Cornelia Brown requests that the State Board of Education grants REVISED Concept Approval for the new Edward Little High School (ELHS) in Auburn. The project, planned for 1,100 Auburn high school students and 210 Lewiston Regional Career and Technical Center (LRTC) students, is being constructed on the existing high school site adjacent to the current ELHS.

State Board of Education Site Approval occurred on September 12, 2018 and Concept Approval on April 10, 2019. The project was approved by local referendum vote on June 11, 2019. After receiving State Board of Education Design and Funding Approval on December 21, 2020, construction documents were issued for bidding.

The COVID pandemic began in March of 2020. Bids were opened on March 2, 2021. Two qualified bids were received, both well over budget. The lowest bid was 6% above cost estimates. Construction contingency was not funded to the 5% standard due to a lack of funds. Investigating cost saving options after bid opening, the owner, architect, and Department staff worked closely with the low bidder, Arthur C. Dudley Contractor/Builder of Standish, to eliminate the budget gap and keep the project on the approved schedule and budget. The most significant reductions came from value engineering, moveable equipment, and project contingency totaling \$6,163,174. A construction contract was signed, and construction began immediately in March of 2021.

Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic and the global events that followed, the project experienced numerous challenges from its inception: increasing costs of materials, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and an extremely overloaded construction market. These conditions continued to worsen and placed unprecedented financial stress on the project. A process has been developed to allow specific material cost increases as a project contingency expense.

Due to required EPA comprehensive testing, a significant amount of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB's) was identified in the existing ELHS which must be abated prior to demolition. If discovered earlier, the financial implications would have been reflected in the project budget presented at the time of Concept Approval. A final plan, which includes abatement, transportation, disposal, and fees, requires an additional \$4,598,331 bond to maintain other budget line items and keep the project on its schedule for student occupancy in Fall of 2023. This will allow the demolition and remaining site work to be completed by Summer of 2024.

This REVISED Concept Approval is being requested pursuant to Title 20-A M.R.S. §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

Project Information:

Project: Auburn School Department - New Edward Little High School Construction Project

Superintendent: Dr. Cornelia Brown

Architect: Harriman – Mark Lee, Lisa Sawin

Schools to be closed: Existing Edward Little High School to be demolished

REVISED Project Budget Information:

Total Project Cost: \$126,614,673 (increased by \$4,598,331 from \$122,016,342)

Local Only (no State participation): \$16,117,492 (no increase)

Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$110,497,181 (increased by \$4,598,331 from \$105,898,850)

COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION: The Commissioner of the Department of Education recommends that the State Board of Education grant REVISED Concept Approval to the Auburn School Department that includes an additional \$4,598,331 in the project budget for the abatement of PCB's at the existing Edward Little High School to complete the construction project.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On February 24, 2023 the School Construction Committee recommended that this exhibit be placed on the March 8, 2023 State Board meeting agenda and that the State Board grant REVISED Concept Approval to the Auburn School Department that includes an additional \$4,598,331 in the project budget for the abatement of PCB's at the existing Edward Little High School to complete the construction project.

MOTION by Kristin Bishop, seconded by Edmond Morin, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education grant REVISED Concept Approval to the Auburn School Department that includes an additional \$4,598,331 in the project budget for the abatement of PCB's at the existing Edward Little High School to complete the construction project. The motion is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICES (NIFS) REVIEW TEAM.

BACKGROUND: The National Institute of Funeral Services has applied for degree granting authority in the State of Maine under Chapters 149 and 170. On October 12, 2022 the State Board of Education approved a review team to consist of Dr. Lynne Coy-Ogan of Husson University to serve as the review team chair, members Dr. Alicia Wilcox of Thomas College and Ms. Julie Ann Johnson of Conroy-Tully Walker Funeral Homes, and Thomas E. Keller as Observer for the State Board of Education.

Two individuals of Maine's institutions of higher education have accepted to join the review team: Elizabeth Russell, EMCC President, and Aili Robinson, University of Maine at Augusta Executive Director of Financial Services and Administration.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Board of Education approve the addition of Elizabeth Russell and Aili Robinson to the NIFS Review Team.

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, that the State Board of Education approve the addition of Elizabeth Russell and Aili Robinson to the NIFS Review Team.

MOTION was withdrawn by Paulette Bonneau and Victoria Kornfield because the Review Team must consist of at least five individuals who are representative of Maine's institutions of higher education. The addition of only two individuals from higher education would bring the total to only four. After further discussion, the recommendation was again brought to a vote.

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education approve

the addition of Elizabeth Russell and Aili Robinson to the NIFS Review Team. The motion is adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Submit expense account vouchers to Sandra Bourget by the 15th day following the month of the expenses incurred.
- Chair Desjardins and members of the board recognized and thanked Wilson Hess for his seven years of outstanding service and dedication on the State Board of Education. They presented him with a framed certificate and acknowledged some of his many contributions to the board.
- The next regular State Board business meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 1:00 PM at the Burton Cross State Office Building, Room 103 and virtually via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by
Sandra Bourget, Secretary Specialist
State Board of Education
