

Governor's Commission on School Construction – Meeting Summary

Date: April 11, 2025
Location: Via Zoom
Time: 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Key Topics

Interim Summary
Discussion Regarding Next Steps

Attending

Commission Members. Valerie Landry (Chair), Jenny Boyden, Elaine Clark, Fern Desjardins, Art Dudley, Roy Gott, Chris Howell, Anthony Jaccarino, Jane McCall, and Rhonda Sperrey
Governor's Office. Joseph Marro
DOE Staff. Chelsey Fortin-Trimble, Daniel Chuhta, Abigail Cram, Laura Cyr, and Chloe Teboe
Other Attendees. WGME

Action Items

- The Interim Summary will be published mid to late next week, capturing discussions thus far. Commission members should send final edits to Chair Landry as soon as possible.
- The final report and recommendations will be completed later this year.
- Commission members should continue to provide information to and from their respective stakeholder groups.
- In the next few weeks, a work plan for the Commission's comment will be developed including a proposed meeting schedule.

Discussion

Commissioner's Update

- On behalf of Commissioner Pender Makin, Associate Commissioner Chelsey Fortin-Trimble provided a brief update on nine bills pertaining to school construction proposed to the Maine Legislature thus far this legislative session.
 - Two pertain to revenue sources:
 - LD 225, [An Act to Reduce Property Taxes and Finance Public School Construction and Education Through a 3 Percent Sales Tax on Hotel and Lodging Place Rentals](#)
 - LD 1312, [An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue for School Construction and for the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund](#)
 - Five pertain to bonding:
 - LD 242, [An Act to Extend the Maximum Time Period for Certain School Construction Bonds](#)
 - LD 363, [An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the School Capital Improvement Fund](#)

- LD 823, [An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Provide for Statewide and Equitable Access to Experiential Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Competition Programs](#)
- LD 826, [An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund](#)
- LD 1256, [An Act to Support Healthy Meal Programs in Maine Schools by Allowing the School Revolving Renovation Fund to Make Loans to Repair and Renovate School Kitchens and Cafeterias](#)
- Two pertain to other construction elements:
 - LD 854, [An Act to Provide Equitable Capital Construction Funding for Maine's Charter Schools](#)
 - LD 1087, [An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major Capital School Construction Costs](#)

Next Steps

Discussion regarding priorities around which to organize the work plan included:

- Examine the possibility of establishing an entity to lead/support the school construction process, with focus on expedition of projects, reduction in soft costs, and standardization of design and systems, master planning, use of data in setting priorities, setting standards for student to square footage ratio, among other items listed in the Interim Summary.
- Consider how to maintain/support local control and engagement, while also reducing cost and complexity of the process.
- Consider short-term, smaller changes to the school construction process, while continuing to address more complex issues (e.g., separate Essential Programs and Services funding formula and debt service) and review the requirements for school administrative unit (SAU) applications to the School Revolving Renovation Fund.
- Examine whether maintenance plans should be a component of school construction, while recognizing/considering the impact on school districts.
- Consider increased local funding for projects to move away from the existing “all-or-nothing” state funding approach.
- Consider pros and cons of diversifying the funding sources for school construction.

Next Commission meeting date TBD.