

## Governor's Commission on School Construction – Meeting Summary

Date: September 5, 2025  
Location: via Zoom  
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

### Attending

*Commission Members.* Valerie Landry (Chair), Pender Makin (Maine DOE Commissioner), Elaine Clark, Hollis Cobb, Fern Desjardins, Art Dudley, Roy Gott, Chris Howell, Anthony Jaccarino, Jane McCall, Rhonda Sperrey  
*Maine DOE Staff.* Glenn Cummings, Laura Cyr, Chelsea Fortin-Trimble, Paula Gravelle, Chloe Teboe  
*Guests.* Joseph Marro (Governor's Office)

### Key Topics

1. Updates from Recent Small Group Meetings
2. Essential Roles, Responsibilities, and Elements of a New Approach

### Action Items

- ➔ A revised draft of Essential Roles and Responsibilities will be sent to members.
  - ➔ In upcoming meetings, the intent is to provide concepts—if not recommendations—for the commission's review, discussion, and disposition.
  - ➔ A summary is being prepared regarding the issues associated with consolidation.
  - ➔ The next regular commission meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 12, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
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### Discussion

#### 1. Updates from Recent Small Group Meetings

Regarding the funding application process:

- Schools in need can be missed because they cannot absorb the costs and navigate the complexities of preparing an application for funding due to a lack of financial capacity, expertise, and/or turnover of superintendents.
- The burden is completely on the school district. Can we be more proactive, make the process simpler, and help to drive the process along?
- Permitting fees to state agencies are substantial, sometimes running into the millions of dollars. These are paid by school districts out of bonded funds.
- Permitting can involve lengthy timelines and delays. Understanding that the timeline depends on variables such as sites and plans—which are outside the control of the permitting authority—is there a way to address this issue with the goal of lower cost and shorter timelines?
- Having all of the information upfront (e.g., permitting agencies, steps, etc.) would assist superintendents.
- If a school district spends the funds needed to apply for state funds and is not selected, this outcome can affect the local referendum outcome.
- We need to keep the concept of partial state funding (as opposed to 100%) in our discussion.
- If we want to be proactive, we can't take a halfway approach. We must be comprehensive.
- If capacity is established to better assist school districts with construction projects, this capacity might be extended in the future to municipalities for other construction purposes.

#### 2. Essential Roles and Responsibilities

The September 1, 2025 draft of Essential Roles and Responsibilities was reviewed at the meeting section by section. Members were largely in agreement with most of the concepts contained therein. Modifications were offered and will be included in a new draft to be reviewed at the September 12 commission meeting.