

Governor's Commission on School Construction – Meeting Summary

Date: September 26, 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, Anthony Jaccarino, Justin Poirier, Rhonda Sperrey

Maine DOE Staff. Scott Brown, Abigail Cram, Glenn Cummings, Laura Cyr, Chelsey Fortin-Trimble, Paula Gravelle

Guests: Max Rush, The Resurgam Group; Donald Bresnahan, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Building Infrastructure Management Solutions

Key Topics

1. Updates
 - Procurement Meeting
 - Maine State Economist Office/DOL Meeting
2. Organizational Model for Essential Elements

Action Items

- Elaine Clark will modify the hybrid model presented in early July highlighting, to the extent possible, the relationships between a potential new entity and the major partners.
- Scott Brown will report on whether the Maine DOE should absorb new functions (versus a separate entity).
- Glenn Cummings will summarize the energy efficiency presentation for commission review.
- A small group meeting on financial/revenue needs/options is scheduled for October 6.

Discussion

1. Updates

Procurement Meeting

- Non-municipal superintendents may be largely unaware of master contracts availability.
- Master contracts are available for supplies, equipment, and construction components (FF&E).
- Municipalities use master contracts; the Maine Municipal Association is willing to assist superintendents in this area.
- David Morris, the Maine Chief Procurement Officer, will provide information on master contracts at a Superintendents Association meeting.

Maine State Economist Office/DOL Meeting

- The State Economist Office and the Maine Department of Labor (DOL) produce an array of demographic and economic analysis that could be instrumental in planning for school

construction. They also are adept at surveying. Both expressed interest and willingness to continue periodic discussion regarding what information is most helpful and how they can best intersect with other data sources at the Maine DOE and others to support data analytics.

2. Organizational Model for Essential Elements

Essential elements were presented and modified at the September 5 meeting. A new draft was reviewed at the September 12 meeting, with members present in general agreement. It was agreed that the next step was to array the elements in an organizational model to present at the September 26 meeting. In reviewing the potential model, members differed regarding where the functions should be located (e.g., in a quasi-independent entity or at the Maine DOE). Two members stated that any new revenue should go to construction only, with the possible exception of funds for the Maine DOE Office of School Facilities to carry out the new essential functions. Additional comments:

- The hybrid model presented on July 8 is envisioned as a driver and connector, not a stand-alone solution. The intent is to move away from a siloed, piecemeal, and reactive approach to a proactive approach.
- If it is not someone's job, it will not get done.
- We need to do things differently; we need a more global approach.
- We need to focus on a long-term solution.
- We need to better understand the distinctions between municipally owned and district schools from the standpoint of access to information.
- We need a culture shift from the "winner takes all" approach in the application process.
- We need a governance authority that is balanced, not driven solely by state government.
- It is easier to understand the essential elements than how the bigger picture would work.
- New funds should go to increasing the capacity of the Maine DOE team and construction. Is the Maine DOE interested in absorbing the new essential elements?
- Can we obtain information regarding the new model (i.e., 1. Who serves as decision-making authority? and 2. How are projects approved and financed?)
- The existing process of school construction is carefully considered and rarely, if ever, have complaints surfaced. The capital construction process may not need fundamental changes.
- School construction is the second largest infrastructure system after transportation.
- The benefits of a quasi-independent model include spanning across administrations and levels of government; maintaining a long-term perspective; allowing exploration of public-private partnerships and philanthropic funding; and involving local input.
- The funding process could change from competitive application to one of eligibility/selection based on a more comprehensive approach to data analytics and planning.
- Existing safeguards maintain funding integrity.

- There is a need for data analytics. The data must be accessible and transparent.
- There is no need to duplicate existing talent.
- When and why did school construction relocate from the Bureau of General Services to the Maine DOE?
- The organizational graphic presented today is conceptual—not an action document.
- All members are invited to contribute ideas, suggestions, and models.