



Certification and Higher Education Committee

Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the May 24, 2023 Meeting

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a virtual monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, via Zoom. The following were present: Chair Wendy Ault, Thomas Keller, Victoria Kornfield, Fern Desjardins, and Paulette Bonneau (Board Members). Deputy Commissioner Chuhta; Michael Perry, Acting Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; and Sandra Bourget, State Board of Education Office Specialist.

Guests: Cynthia Alexander; Mallory Cook; Andrea Stairs-Davenport; Tracy Lentz; Dolly Sullivan; and Kaitlin Young.

Chair Wendy Ault called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

Approval of Minutes:

There were no minutes for approval.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Update from the University of Maine Educator Preparation Program:

On behalf of the UMaine System EPPs, Andrea Stairs-Davenport from USM attended today's meeting. She discussed a congressional earmark that is being supported by Senator Collins for 3.3 million dollars. It's been referred to the Appropriation Committee to be included in the FY24 budget. It is focused on rural education and improving the preparation, recruitment, and retention of rural educators. This will be an entire UMaine System collaboration.

There's a dire need to recruit Special Educators, so we're working on an initiative for that. Gorham School Department has a collaboration with SMCC to prepare Ed Tech I and Ed Tech IIs for effective support of students for classroom teachers. This is a registered apprenticeship model through Maine Department of Labor, and we're hoping to mimic it. We're excited about this, and it would be the first registered teacher apprenticeship at the Bachelor level. The idea is to recruit individuals who are already working as Ed Techs, perhaps some adult career changers, and is an opportunity for degree completion.

The Maine Teacher Residency Program is going well this year. We have between 50-70 residents from around the state coming from different colleges and universities that are taking advantage of this opportunity.

USM is hosting the State Board of Education retreat in August on the Portland Campus, in the Wishcamper Building. Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau asked the committee for input on what they would be looking for on agenda items to maximize their time together.

Higher Education:

- Tom Keller drafted a Chapter 149 checklist for initial and additional degree granting authorizations. These drafts capture timelines, what the MDOE is responsible for, and what the State Board of Education is responsible for. Trying to bring codification to this process, so we have an algorithm to ensure all steps are complete. If this is helpful, we should consider a similar checklist for EPP visits.

Michael Perry outlined Chapter 149 rule and discussed in great detail the timeline of what has been accomplished to date.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield and unanimously voted by those present to receive the Review Committee Report of Findings Concerning the Application from the National Institute of Funeral Services (NIFS) as amended. The motion passes.

Tom Keller extended thanks and appreciation to the NIFS chair and review committee members for their effort, time, and professionalism.

Review of Annual Reports for Chapter 114 Approved Programs:

16 colleges submit this report to the Committee. The reports are due each year by April 7. With Title II being added to the annual reports, it has made them a bit longer.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the following reports:

- Bates College
- Bowdoin
- Colby College

The Committee will continue review of annual reports starting with College of the Atlantic at the June 28, 2023, meeting.

Certification:

- 3,142 applications were received in April.
- The team viewed 11,451 educator profiles in April.
- May has been more active than April. Lots of questions about renewals. On pace to pass April's number by 25% for May.
- 282 emergency certification – received an Office of Special Education Programs memo from the Federal DOE indicating there shouldn't be certification for Special Education that lowers the threshold for Special Education certification. Emergency

certification is included. Communication went out to the field that 282-emergency certification is not available at this time.

- DOE's Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education are putting together ideas for educators who have expiring emergency certification and are looking to complete the nine credit hours in Special Education that are required to move to conditional certification. Once they are conditional, they will have three years to achieve full professional and finish the course work. OSSIE will put out recommendations for educator who fall into this category, and the DOE will do personal outreach to these individuals.
- Processing time for new applicants is approximately 3-4 weeks.
- DOE will be interviewing for the Certification Coordinator position.
- DOE is also in the active recruitment phase for the Director of the Office of Higher Education and Education Support Services position.
- MEIS system underwent an FBI audit on May 17 to see how DOE handles criminal history record information. The audit went well; DOE received provisional passage pending signature from a third party on a form.
- Michael Perry is the new Local Area Security Officer (LASO), registered with the FBI, and he took Level 4 training.
- 2,550 violations in January dropped to 1,202 currently. Down 150 from April.
- There was a miscommunication regarding A.D. waivers. The Certification Team has been retrained and everyone is on the same page now.
- Priority notice went out around DOE's draft list of teacher shortage areas. We are inviting public comment before finalizing the report.
- The Data Team is working on troubleshooting MEIS and NEO issues. The work is ongoing.

Other Business:

Dolly Sullivan and Kaitlin Young, with Educate Maine, gave a presentation on The Maine Center of Teaching and Learning, in respect to the educator workforce crisis. In partnership with MDOE and other stakeholders, Educate Maine plans to establish The Maine Center of Teaching and Learning. Educate Maine applied for an earmark with Senator King, and it has been referred to the Appropriations Committee. The center will be administered by Educate Maine with support from Stakeholder groups, and it will operate under the framework of the Teach Maine Plan. We see this as an innovative hub, for teachers by teachers. We believe this is a call to action, and it will empower and elevate our educators.

The committee discussed the amended L.D. 485, which will include 5 bills. We will hold a work group and provide a response to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee by January 2, 2024.

The next regular Certification Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 10:30 AM.

Adjournment:

The May 24, 2023, Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting adjourned at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Bourget, Office Specialist
Maine State Board of Education