



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 September 13, 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; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; Denham Ward; Ryan Hafener; and Phat Thai.

Absent with Excuse: Wendy Ault

Others Present: Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs; Valerie Chiang, School Construction Coordinator; Deb Alden; Lisa Sawin; Christopher Howell; Bill Hansen; Lance Whitehead; Joe Britton; and Sandra Bourget, State Board of Education Office Specialist.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Roll call was taken by Sandra Bourget. Chair Desjardins 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.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

No Adjustments to the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present to accept the August 16, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present to accept the September 1, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment.

STUDENT TRANSFER APPEALS:

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REQUESTS FOR REVIEW OF STUDENT TRANSFER REQUESTS

Fern Desjardins, Chair of the Board, read a procedure for the Board when going into executive session to review requests for review of the Superintendents’ decisions on student transfer requests.

The Board will be considering requests for Board review of the Superintendents’ decisions regarding requested transfers of students to another school district, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205(6)(F). The Board will be going into executive session to consider the requests because each one involves reviewing and discussing information contained in student records made confidential by the federal law known as FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The parents and any attorney representing a parent are welcome to attend the executive session for the discussion of their particular student’s transfer, as are the Superintendents of the school districts involved in that requested transfer. The Board will review each of the transfer requests in separate executive sessions. Today, the Board has one transfer request.

After the Board comes out of executive session, the Board will entertain a motion and take a vote on the disposition of the request in public session.

The Board’s role in these proceedings is to review the Superintendents’ decisions based on the record that was before them at the time they made the

decision. Although the statute directs the Board to “communicate with” the parties involved, which the Board has done, the Board cannot accept any new evidence pertaining to a transfer request that was not considered or not available in the record at the time of the Superintendents’ decision.

The Board provides for public comment, which was explained earlier in the meeting. In the executive session the same rules apply for public comment and there will be a three-minute time limit for comment. This is not a time for debate or a time to introduce new evidence. It is a time for families to highlight the things they want the Board to consider in the record.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Kristin Bishop, and unanimously voted by those present for the Board to go into Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes, section 405, subsection 6, paragraph F, to discuss information contained in records that are confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title 20 of the United States Code, section 1232g relating to a request from SG to review the Superintendents’ decisions to approve or disapprove a request for a student transfer, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205, subsection 6, paragraph F at 1:07 PM.

The Board returned to the regular business meeting at 1:25 PM.

MOTION by Kristin Bishop, seconded by Denham Ward, and voted unanimously that given the information the Board received, it was in SG’s best interest to approve a transfer. The transfer was approved.

On August 16, 2023, the Board reviewed an appeal for CS and voted unanimously to return the appeal documents to the superintendents and parents for a review of the information provided.

Follow up: The superintendents reviewed the information, and the resident superintendent approved the *Request for a Superintendent’s Agreement*, and the receiving superintendent approved it, too. The appeal has been settled locally by both superintendents.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, Fern Desjardins

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- August 15 -16, 2023 – Paulette Bonneau for working so effectively with Andrea Stairs-Davenport, Associate Dean, University of Southern Maine, in bringing together 14/16 representatives from Maine’s Educator Preparation Programs for discussion at the State Board’s Annual Retreat. Thank you, Wendy Ault, for your gifts of appreciation presented to Paulette and Andrea.
- August 27 – Kristin Bishop for representing the State Board of Education at the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the new Edward Little High School. She delivered an extremely well written speech. Thank you to Edmond Morin and Paulette for providing Kristin with some details regarding CTE and for Edmond who also represented the State Board at the ceremony.
- September 1 – Special Board meeting for nine student transfer appeals. All board members attended the meeting, which lasted over 3.5 hours without a break. The care, compassion, and due diligence in addressing students’ best interest on all appeals was outstanding.
- Denham Ward – Attended all three sessions of New Member Institute. He did an excellent job applying parliamentary procedures in his role as president of a board in Session II and asked interesting technical questions of presenters in the various sessions (e.g., having significant results when there is only a small sample or an intervention being an improvement in educational research vs. clinical research (trials)).
- Thomas Keller, Edmond Morin, Paulette Bonneau, Wendy Ault, and James Ford for serving as Chair or Co-Chair to some of our committees. It requires much time and dedication!
- Ryan Hafener for his interview on *Student Voice: Removing Barriers to Student Leadership* in the September 2023 issue of The State Education Standard.

Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- Paulette thanked Fern for her leadership, diligence, persistence, and attention to detail on running an effective Board.
- She attended an agenda review meeting.
- The October 11, 2023, SBE meeting is scheduled in Caribou.
- Paulette is working on solidifying locations for November and December.

- She attended the Special SBE meeting on September 1.
- Paulette will be attending the NASBE Annual Conference in October with Fern.
- In July, Paulette was extremely busy planning the retreat; in August she was catching up on her other responsibilities.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

The School Construction Committee met on August 25, 2023.

- The committee recommended the exhibit that will be taken up under New Business to grant Design & Funding Approval to RSU 10 for the new PreK-8 school construction project.
- They also recommended the exhibit that will be taken up under New Business to grant Concept Approval to RSU 14 for the new Middle School construction project.
- Committee members discussed a correspondence received from Senate President Troy Jackson and Senate Majority Leader Eloise Vitelli. The senators asked that the committee “better define and articulate what an ‘emergency’ means within the context of school construction funding.” They also suggested, “that the Committee develop a better plan to ensure that funding for such emergencies is set aside and available.” Lastly, they asked “that when a school system presents the State Board of Education with a bona fide emergency ... these schools should be granted priority or emergency status and immediately placed at the top of the next cycle of approved construction rating list for funding.” No action was taken by the Committee.
- Final actions by the Legislature on bills impacting school construction and renovations were discussed. Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs, MDOE, and Fern will be meeting with Laura Cyr, Federal and State Legislative Specialist, MDOE, on August 31 to begin discussions on LD 1415 and Chapter 61.
- The next Committee meeting will be held virtually via Zoom on September 21 at 9:00 a.m.

Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):

The Certification and Higher Education (C&HE) Committee met on August 23, 2023.

- Review committees and site visits for Beal University and Syracuse University are under consideration. Victoria Kornfield will be the State Board observer for the Syracuse University review, and Denham Ward will be the observer for the Beal University review. Denham has started using the checklist for Chapter 149 visits, to ground truth it and to determine its usefulness.
- Although there is nothing in Chapter 149 or 170 stipulating that a SBE member attend these reviews, it is a SBE policy to have a State Board observer on every Teacher Preparation Program Review and every degree granting authority review.
- Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) up for review soon include Husson University; Maine College of Art and Design; and Unity College, although they appear to be going a different direction; Bowdoin College; and University of New England. Michael is tracking all of these and communicating with campus leaders to determine when and how to proceed. Penny Bishop was asked how to proceed with UMaine at Machias with its status as a regional campus. Will their teacher accreditation come under state/CAEP or just state review?
- Michael Perry has created a form and hopes to post it on the MDOE website, encouraging faculty members to sign up for review committees. It was noted that both College of Education and College of Arts and Science faculty should be asked. New training materials are needed although it might be best to wait and see when chapter 114 may be reviewed.
- It was determined that the certifications and endorsements that an institution is seeking approval to offer be listed by name in the final review report.
- Three more EPP Annual Reports were reviewed: Husson University, St. Joseph's College, and Thomas College. We would like to find a way to share these reports with all the EPPs. Penny Bishop said she would give that some thought.
- It seems that Erin Reinhard will move into the Coordinator position with MDOE. No word on Michael Perry's status.
- Updates were given on the Maine Educator Information System – June is the most active month, and on the Violation report with 1,718 violations, a letter goes to the superintendent or CTE director.

- We discussed L.D. 485 and the need for a report to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on a variety of issues they identified, as well as others we may have noted. Victoria Kornfield and Thomas Keller will take the lead on developing that report with Michael Perry's assistance.
- Penny Bishop gave the TeaMe report, and additional topics discussed were aspects of mentoring, longitudinal data on new teachers, and the commonality of local advisory boards for EPPs.
- Educator Recruitment and Retention was a topic of conversation between Denham Ward and Andrew McCollough, chair of the Professional Standards Board. We are hoping the PSB will make this their main topic this year.
- The next meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2023.

Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee met on August 24, 2023.

- MDOE CTE Director, Dwight Littlefield, announced that Donna Tiner, who has been the point person at MDOE for both the Perkins V federal funding that goes to Maine's CTE's and Community Colleges and the Briggs Trust, has taken a new position at MDOE in the Finance Department. It was noted by members of the CTE Committee that she will be greatly missed. However, a search is underway to find her replacement.
- Dwight also provided an update on legislation related to CTE that was considered during this past legislative session. One of the more important bills signed into law would provide Career and Technical Education Students Credit Toward High School Graduation for Work Completed in Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions. There's a three-year process for agreements to be arranged between sending schools and the CTEs.
- Dwight also announced that MDOE is doing an audit with Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan funds, and the department will be traveling to schools to see what they have for equipment.
- Community College representative, Mercedes Pour, observed that Free College has been extended, that their Skills and Technical Trades programs are full and fill up early, and that dual and concurrent enrollment continues to move forward.
- Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education Director, Dave Keaton, announced that there's going to be a break-out session in the Fall conference, so that all Maine CTE educators can hear about the recently

completed report regarding innovation and career readiness in Maine CTE's. Dave said a committee has been formed to study the report and consider next steps.

- Educate Maine's Jason Judd reports that Educate Maine continues to expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for Maine CTE Regions and Centers, and that there's a lot of focus on professional development through the academic year.
- An area of discussion among participants dealt with various research projects and reports dealing with CTE that have been put together. Eight have been created since 2017. During the CTE session at the SBE's recent retreat, the question was asked, "Now that we have all these reports, what now?" The CTE Committee meeting, which so many stakeholders attend, would be an ideal place to explore this question. What came out of the discussion was a willingness by several participants to do in-depth examinations of several of the more recent reports to see how to move forward with the information that's been obtained.
- The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2023.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

The Legislative Action Committee has not met.

- The Education and Cultural Affairs Committee conducted a work session on the EPS Funding Formula. This was the first of four scheduled meetings to discuss EPS as it relates to all aspects of Maine educational funding. MDOE provided an overview of the history of EPS and how it has evolved over the years.

Student Voices (Ryan Hafener, Phat Thai, and James Ford):

The Student Voices Committee met on September 11, 2023.

- Ryan is excited to have Phat as his partner on Student Voices Committee.
- He was at Seeds of Peace camp, which was well attended, during SBE's Annual Retreat.
- Ryan had an internship with MDOE this summer in communications and legislative affairs, which was a terrific experience.
- They are in the planning phase for the Student Cabinet, which will start up this Fall. It will be redesigned this year and will be geared towards outcome.
- Ryan had an article in The State Education Standard on student engagement on State Boards.
- Phat reported that his first Student Voices Committee meeting was mostly

welcoming him aboard, and he was very appreciative of that.

- Phat thanked all SBE members for being so welcoming and helpful.
- He started a CTE class at Portland Arts and Technology High School in cyber security and says it has been amazing.
- Phat recently started a Seeds of Peace Club at Deering High School.

Board Effectiveness (Paulette Bonneau):

The Board Effectiveness Committee did not meet in August.

- We will continue to work on the State Board's Policies.
- Will reflect and work on Boardsmanship.
- The next meeting will be held on September 25, 2023.

Charter Commission Representatives (Victoria Kornfield, Thomas Keller, and James Ford):

The Charter School Commission met on September 12, 2023.

- The Charter Commission will take five new steps, which include: forming a new Strategic Plan; creating a work calendar; reviewing original legislation; reviewing internal policies; and opening up the 10th slot for Charter Schools, which is a two-year process.
- Norm Higgins and Lana Ewing will meet with Mary Herman, MDOE, to improve the relationship between the Charter Commission and the Department of Education.

Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):

- Denham Ward will attend his first PSB meeting on October 15, 2023.
- Chair Desjardins has sent the letter for Denham to be appointed.

NASBE:

Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):

- The third and final session of the New Member Institute took place on August 30, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Fern thanked Denham Ward for attending all three sessions and Tom for attending the last session. Session 3 was on education policy, communications and engagement for success, and the importance of state boards and chiefs working together. Next year's New Member Institute will take place in person.

- Fern encouraged members to read their September 8 monthly newsletter from President and CEO Paolo DeMaria. Every month DeMaria provides timely information on upcoming events, and he reviews a few of the activities of the past month, including links to access recordings of many of those events. Fern reminded members that they get from MSBE's membership in NASBE what they reach out to access.
- The Executive Committee met on August 28. They reviewed the Delegate Assembly agenda for the October 28 meeting to be held on the last day of the Annual Conference in San Diego. An update of NASBE's finances was provided and officers were informed that the accounting contractor changeover to Michael R. Cernauskas, CPA has gone smoothly.
- The September issue of The State Education Standard will be released via email. The issue focuses on *Engaging All Students*.
- Fern attended the September 11 Office Hours, which were combined with a webinar that hosted FutureEd and the National Council on Teacher Quality. They presented findings on the science of reading and teacher preparation. Colorado was highlighted for its educator preparation program reauthorization process that focused on scientifically-based reading instruction.

Awards Committee (Thomas Keller):

- The committee did not meet in August.

Government Affairs Committee (Thomas Keller):

- The committee met on August 30, 2023, for a special meeting on data visualizations from the Raise the Bar initiative.
- Raise the Bar has three Key Focus Areas with 2 goals under each.
- First focus area is: Achieve Academic Excellence
 - Goal 1: Accelerate learning for every student.
 - Goal 2: Deliver a comprehensive and rigorous education for every student.
- Data visualizations will be released using existing data to show the impact on these goals state by state, and they are encouraging the use during press releases.
- Commissioner Makin and Deputy Commissioner Chuhta attended this hour-long virtual meeting.
- The committee met on September 5, 2023, for their regular meeting.
- There was a short report on the fires on Maui. They have lost track of 1,200 (1/3 of students) kids in the Lahaina area.

- The House is continuing to defund Title II and Title IV. Congressional representatives should be reminded of the value of these funds to local schools and states.

Public Education Positions Committee (Paulette Bonneau):

- Paulette has been involved in high school redesign for student success, which included touching upon accountability and assessment. We need to prepare students for career and college pathways. The committee looked at original pathways and encouraged alternative pathways as well. There's a need for learning beyond school walls and the school day. Encouraging work-based learning options.
- Paulette discussed the recommendations of the Public Education Positions Committee paper that will be voted on during NASBE'S October Annual Conference.

UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS:

No Unfinished Business

NEW BUSINESS:

REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE MAINE CARL D. PERKINS GRANT AS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (P. L. 115-224)

BACKGROUND: As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds to support vocational and technical education, §122 of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224), requires a designated eligible agency in each State, which in Maine is the State Board of Education, to submit a State Plan for Career and Technical Education. The State Plan was approved by the Office of Career and Technical and Adult Education on May 22, 2020. Further requirements are as follows:

SEC. 121. STATE ADMINISTRATION.

(a) ELIGIBLE AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities of an eligible agency under this title shall include:

(3) convening and meeting as an eligible agency (consistent with State law and procedure for the conduct of such meetings) at such time as the eligible agency determines necessary to carry out the eligible agency's responsibilities under this title, but not less than 4 times annually;

The State Board of Education Chair has requested, in accordance with Title 20-A, Section 405, 7, that the Career and Technical Education (CTE) team submits a quarterly financial report to the Board and in response to this request we are submitting this report as the fourth and final report for FY2023.

RECOMMENDATION: The State Board of Education approve the Quarterly report for the period of April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, of the State of Maine Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224).

MOTION by Edmond Morin, seconded by James Ford, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education approve the Quarterly report for the period of April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, of the State of Maine Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224) pursuant to Title 20-A M.R.S. § 405(7).

MAJOR CAPITAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM; DESIGN AND FUNDING APPROVAL CONSIDERATION; RSU 10/MSAD 10 - NEW PREK-8 SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

STATEMENT OF FACT: RSU 10 Superintendent Deborah Alden requests that the State Board of Education grant Design and Funding Approval for a new PreK-8 school to be constructed in the town of Mexico. Rumford Elementary School (grades PreK-4) rated 3rd on the Final Priority List of the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle and was placed on the Approved Projects List at the October 9, 2019, State Board of Education meeting.

RSU 10 hired Harriman to conduct a New vs. Renovations analysis of the existing Rumford Elementary School and similar studies of the elementary and middle school buildings in the Mountain Valley region of the district. These analyses resulted in a recommendation to construct a school that would also include the students from Meroby Elementary (grades PreK-4) and Mountain Valley Middle School (grades 5-8). The new PreK-8 school will provide educational programs and services for 1,034 students. The project will include space for Child Development Services (CDS) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early Childhood programming. It will eliminate 3 portable classrooms and expand Pre-K programming, in support of the district's goal to improve educational equity.

The proposed new school will be built on the existing Meroby Elementary and Mountain Valley Middle School 30.87-acre site. The site will allow the new school to be constructed while the existing schools remain operational. This site benefits from good access and is well served by existing utility and transportation infrastructure. The project received State Board of Education Site Approval on August 11, 2021, and Concept Approval on April 13, 2022. The district held a referendum for the project on June 14, 2022, which passed. The vote was later nullified because the warrant did not get posted in one town in the district within the legally required 7-day notice. A second referendum was held on November 8, 2022, and resulted in approval of the project. The delay created challenges for the project including a revised project schedule and budget. As a result, timelines for the project were extended beyond the requirements of Chapter 61 Section 6.2.F., Time Limitations, (2) and (3).

The Department of Education's Construction Team is currently working with the architect in finalizing the construction documents for bidding. Due to cost increases the scope of the site work for the project has been reduced and several components of the building have been identified as alternates for bidding. The new building has been designed to meet the Department of Education school construction standards and is in the final stages of receiving all required approvals.

Design and Funding 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: RSU 10/MSAD 10 New PreK-8 School Construction Project (includes EC, CTE, CDS, and local hospital health partner)

Superintendent: Deborah Alden

Architect: Harriman – Mark Lee and Lisa Sawin

Schools to be closed: Rumford Elementary School, Meroby Elementary School, and Mountain Valley Middle School

Project Budget Information:

Total Project Cost: \$91,802,395.

Local Only (no State participation): \$1,177,036.

Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$90,625,359.

COMMISSIONER’S RECOMMENDATION: The Commissioner of the Department of Education recommends that the State Board of Education grant Design and Funding Approval to RSU 10/MSAD 10 for a new PreK-8 school construction project as presented. The Commissioner further recommends that Chapter 61 Sections 6.2.F., Time Limitations, (2) and (3) be waived by the State Board.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On August 25, 2023 the School Construction Committee recommended that this exhibit be placed on the September 13, 2023 State Board meeting agenda and that the State Board grant Design and Funding Approval to RSU 10/MSAD 10 for a new PreK-8 school construction project as presented and waive Chapter 61 Section 6.2.F., Time Limitations, (2) and (3), pursuant to Section 2.5.C, whereby the State Board finds reasons for a waiver.

MOTION by Kristin Bishop, seconded by James Ford, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education grant Design and Funding Approval to RSU 10/MSAD 10 for a new PreK-8 school construction project as presented and waive Chapter 61 Section 6.2.F., Time Limitations, (2) and (3), pursuant to Section 2.5.C, whereby the State Board finds reasons for a waiver. The second referendum resulted in approval of the project, and the subsequent revised project schedule and budget are workable. This MOTION is pursuant to Title 20-A M.R.S. §15905(1) and Chapter 61, State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

MAJOR CAPITAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM; CONCEPT APPROVAL CONSIDERATION; RSU 14/MSAD 14 - NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

STATEMENT OF FACT: RSU 14/MSAD 14 Superintendent Christopher Howell requests that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval for a new grades 5-8 school to be constructed in the town of Windham. Windham Middle School (grades 6-8) rated 5th on the Final Priority List of the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle and was placed on the Approved Projects List at the November 4, 2020, State Board of Education meeting.

RSU 14/MSAD 14 hired Lavallee Brensinger Architects to complete a New vs. Renovation analysis of the existing Windham Middle School and conduct further studies of the other elementary and middle school buildings in the district. This analysis resulted in a recommendation for new construction of a grades 5-8 Middle School which would include students from the Jordan Small

Middle School (grades 5-8) in Raymond. The proposed new school went through a vigorous visioning process with strong community involvement. This recommendation will also allow for universal Pre-K programming in the district.

The project received State Board of Education Site Approval on July 12, 2023. The selected site is in the Windham Center Growth Area, is within 2 miles of the Windham High School/Primary School Campus, and a plan for utility and transportation infrastructure is in place.

The new building has been designed in accordance with the Department of Education school construction standards. Appropriate state and local agencies have had input in the planning process. The building will have an Energy Use Intensity (EUI - energy use in kBtu per square foot annually) of 35. The district intends to significantly reduce the EUI using solar panels through a power purchase agreement.

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

Project Description by Christopher Howell, Superintendent

In 2018, Windham Middle School was identified as #5 on the Maine Department of Education Major Capital List for school construction. The building, which opened in 1977, scored high on the list through documented structural issues, ventilation issues, aging mechanical systems, and overcrowding. The structure and layout of the building along with a lack of space for specialized instruction, has created difficulties for meeting the diverse needs of middle level students. One third of students from the building need to be housed in the adjacent Field Allen School on campus. Students must walk across a parking lot to access the cafeteria, library, applied arts classes, and the main office. Windham Middle School is inadequate in size for the population that it serves.

In early 2020, the district hired Lavalley Brensinger Architects of Portland, Maine, to complete a 'new' versus 'renovation' study and to complete a comprehensive study of the current grade configurations of buildings in the district. The district also partnered with Dr. Fran Locker, to conduct a comprehensive visioning process with district middle school staff. The extensive planning with Dr. Locker challenged our staff to critically think about instructional best practices and the future of middle level education. This work set the foundation for our planning

and heavily influenced the Educational Specifications for the proposed new middle school.

The district wide facility study conducted by Lavallee Brensinger Architects, the visioning work completed by Dr. Fran Locker, and initial discussions with the Maine Department of Education Construction team, identified a need for the district to examine the possibility of including students in grades 5-8 from Jordan Small Middle School (JSMS), Raymond, and 5th grade students from Manchester School, Windham, in this project. The work concluded that a Windham only construction project would have created inequitable access to programs and services for students at the same grade level in the same district. The district has been working towards providing equitable opportunities for students at the same grade level across the district and it has been a focus of educational planning and budgeting since the inception of the RSU. Even with this focus, the task has been difficult because of school size differences, fiscal sustainability of small programs, and geographic distance between the two buildings. JSMS was built in 1964 as an elementary school. In the late 90's the school underwent a partial renovation as part of a repurposing of the building to a middle school. The RSU 14 School board and the town of Raymond Selectboard facilitated a series of community conversations around the possibility of merging the two middle schools together. In November of 2021, it was determined that the district would move forward with a project that would combine grades 5-8 from the two towns of Windham and Raymond.

The development of a new middle school serving students in grades 5 to 8 will benefit students beyond the grade levels that are targeted for this project. Two of the three elementary schools will undergo a shift of grade levels. The change in grade configurations will provide an opportunity for the district to offer a universal full day pre-k program. With our current lottery system, there are typically over 80 families on a wait list.

The new Windham Raymond Middle School concept design has been developed to fulfill the vision that was created by multiple RSU 14 stakeholders through our extensive 3-year visioning process. The concept supports a project-based learning model that emphasizes the importance of an integrated curriculum and opportunities for students to be engaged through multiple opportunities for hands-on learning. Art, STEM, and foreign language classrooms have been placed in central core locations in each wing to promote fluid integration with academic teams. The design recognizes the needs of students to feel connected to a small cohort within the context of a larger school. Students will be housed in 12

different team areas over the 4 grade levels housed in the school. Each of the team areas can function independently, focusing on the individual needs of the students that they are serving. To further support our educational vision for this building, the district is investing in common areas for each of the teams and grade levels that will further support the integration of subject areas and collaboration amongst students.

The concept maximizes the amount of square footage that is dedicated to educational programming. A typical middle school design loses 15 to 20 percent of floor space to non-educational functions (circulation, mechanical and storage). The efficient design has reduced this percentage to roughly 6%.

The RSU 14 Middle School Building Committee has been focused on energy efficiency, safety, and long-term sustainability of the project as well as the efficiency of the delivery of academic programs. A subcommittee composed of building engineers, mechanical engineers, and interested individuals have been working over the past year and a half to research and recommend possible building systems, mechanical systems, and building layouts. The committee has recommended air source heat pumps for the heating and ventilation system. The committee has recommended additional window glazing and insulation that will help to provide the best possible learning environment with the least environmental impact at the lowest possible cost. The building committee is recommending the exploration of a solar power purchase agreement that will further support the long-term sustainability of this project.

The committee is using the project as an opportunity to invest in programs and services to support middle level students and the greater community. The project will include a locally funded 600 seat auditorium with supporting technical spaces, a greenhouse, student and community access to an adjacent nature preserve, an indoor walking track for student and community use, and an investment in large collaborative spaces within the building to support team and grade level projects.

The process of developing our design concept has had an impact on middle level education in our district. The multiple meetings and planning conversations that have led to the design have also served to bring the staff from our two middle schools together. We are more than excited about the programs and opportunities that we will be able to offer our students and the positive impacts that it will have for years to come.

Project Information:

Project: RSU 14/MSAD 14 New Grades 5-8 Middle School Construction Project
Superintendent: Christopher Howell
Architect: Lavallee Brensinger Architects – Lance Whitehead
Schools to be closed: Windham Middle School and Jordan Small Middle School

Project Budget Information:

Total Project Cost: \$171,551,289.
Local Only (no State participation): \$39,838,444.
Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$131,712,845.

COMMISSIONER’S RECOMMENDATION: The Commissioner of the Department of Education recommends that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to RSU 14/MSAD 14 for a new grades 5-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On August 25, 2023, the School Construction Committee recommended that this exhibit be placed on the September 13, 2023, State Board meeting agenda and that the State Board grant Concept Approval to RSU 14/MSAD 14 for a new grades 5-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

MOTION by Edmond Morin, seconded by Kristin Bishop, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to RSU 14/MSAD 14 for a new grades 5-8 Middle School construction project as presented pursuant to Title 20-A M.R.S. §15905(1) and Chapter 61, State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION (NASBE)
VOTING DELEGATE**

MOTION by Edmond Morin, seconded by James Ford, and unanimously voted by those present that Paulette Bonneau be designated as the National Association of State Boards of Education Voting Delegate at the 2023 Annual Conference, and that Fern Desjardins be designated as the alternate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Submit expense account vouchers to Sandra Bourget by the 15th day following the month of the expenses incurred.
- The next regular State Board meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 1:00 PM at the Caribou Community School and virtually via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 PM.

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