



Certification and Higher Education Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the September 27, 2023 Meeting

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a virtual monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, via Zoom. The following were present: Chair Thomas Keller, Victoria Kornfield, and Denham Ward (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; Steve Bailey; Penny Bishop; Jim Boothby; Dr. Anita Charles; Mallory Cook; Eileen King; Matt Nelson; Jeremy Ray; and Vicki Wallack.

Chair Tom Keller called the meeting to order at 10:32 AM.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Denham Ward, and unanimously voted by those present to accept the August 23, 2023, minutes as amended. The motion passes.

Public Comment:

Four people provided public comment. They were Dr. Anita Charles, Jim Boothby, Matt Nelson, and Jeremy Ray.

They focused their comments on certification and their need for more communication, flexibility, and common sense in decisions regarding certification. Several individual cases were cited with teachers having many years of experience running into hurdles trying to get certified. An interesting idea that surfaced was to have ‘Regional Certification Office Sites’ that rotated around the state such that applicants could make their cases directly to certification staff. Outcomes of this would be improved communications, enhanced relationships, and clarity.

Higher Education Update:

- Michael put a sign-up form online for the higher education community for EPP reviews. It was noted that there is no extra compensation for being on reviews. It was recommended that formal letters be written from the State Board and possibly co-signed by the commissioner to individuals who serve on these committees.
- Next institutions up for review are Husson University and Maine College of Art and Design. Denham Ward volunteered to be the observer for the Maine College of Art and

Design review. Michael is waiting for information to schedule the Syracuse University review.

- There was discussion about a seven-year approval versus five year for program reviews. Perhaps this could be done during the SBE motion. (NOTE: this cannot be done by an SBE motion; we must go by the current chapter 114 rule.)
- Beal University is ready to schedule a site review; we should pursue this immediately. They are offering master's degree programming now, even though they apparently do not have master's degree granting authority to do so.
- Michael attended a SARA conference – State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. This impacts teachers who are certified in other states and the ease of becoming certified in Maine.
- Various programs exist for mentors, interns, and apprentices. The Maine SEEDS program with UMaine and MDOE is for mentoring conditionally certified special education teachers, USM with UMaine has earmark funds for training mentor teachers, and the MDOE has a mentor program.

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 longer.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the following reports:

- University of Maine
- University of Maine at Augusta
- University of Maine at Farmington

The Committee will continue the review of annual reports starting with the University of Maine at Machias at the October 25, 2023, meeting.

Certification Update:

- 3,923 applications were processed in August, which is increase from July but equal year to year.
- 2,030 criminal history records check clearances were processed during August.
- Violations numbers may not be accurate right now as school districts are updating their NEO reporting. Proactive communication was sent out to superintendents quicker this year to assist. CIPS codes seem to still be out of alignment. There is new mapping underway by the MDOE and it is currently sitting with the data team.
- Michael spoke of interdisciplinary certification not existing in Chapter 115. It would be nice to have that flexibility.

Update from the Maine Educator Preparation Programs:

On behalf of the EPPs, Dr. Anita Charles from the Bates College attended today's meeting. Dr. Charles started by thanking the State Board for the collaboration with EPPs, and she said EPPs are grateful. Dr. Charles helped initiate Teacher Educator Alliance of Maine (TEAMe) 10 years ago, and she's very proud of that. She noted there is little new information to report on.

EPPs shared concerns and recommendations regarding Chapter 115. Some institutions put in for opportunities with apprenticeship RFPs. Discussions took place around the Maine Teacher Residency Program. They spoke about camp counselors who come to Maine and possibly would like to be certified.

Other Business:

- Denham Ward has not met with the Professional Standards Board. Informally, it was discussed that PSB's focus this year would be to implement their recommendations on teacher recruitment and retention.
- Lots of initiatives around recruitment and retention; let's try to intersect all of them.
- Teacher of the Year finalists are very impressive. It will be a very difficult decision.
- Denham discussed data that showed a decline in high school students who are going on to college and asked if there could be a discussion at a future meeting on how the data is collected and what the concerns are.

The next regular Certification Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 10:30 AM.

Adjournment:

The September 27, 2023, Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting adjourned at 11:46 AM.

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