



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 May 14, 2026 at the Margaret Chase Smith Community School, at Skowhegan, Maine. The following members were present: Chair Paulette Bonneau; Vice Chair Thomas Keller; Victoria Cohen; Fern Desjardins; Edmond Morin; Denham Ward; and Abbey Hamilton. James Ford and Wendy Ault attended virtually via Zoom.

Absent Excused: Cedar Worster

Others Present: Dan Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner, Linda Quinn, Board Chair of MSAD 54, Jason Bellerose, Assistant Principle at Skowhegan Area High School, Grace Dunton, Student, Craig Flowers, State Board of Education Office Specialist.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair Paulette Bonneau called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

Roll call was taken by Craig Flowers and Chair Bonneau declared a quorum present.

VISION STATEMENT:

Read by board member, Abbey Hamilton: 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:

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

MOTION by Vicky Cohen to table minutes of April 19^h 2026, seconded by Ed Morin, and unanimously voted by those present to table the minutes of April 9th, 2026 as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

STUDENT TRANSFER APPEALS:

STUDENT TRANSFER APPEALS: PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REQUESTS FOR REVIEW OF STUDENT TRANSFER REQUESTS

Paulette Bonneau, Chair of the State 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 go into executive session to consider the requests because each involves reviewing and discussing information contained in student records that are confidential under 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 to discuss their particular student's transfer, as are the Superintendents of the school districts involved in that requested transfer.

The Board will review each transfer request in separate executive sessions. Today, the Board has two student 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 Thomas Keller, 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 QW 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 1:48 PM.

MOTION by Paulette Bonneau, seconded by Vicky Cohen, and voted unanimous in favour, that it is in PL's best interest, given the information the State Board received, to disapprove the transfer. The transfer was denied.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- April 2nd: Paulette attended the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee Confirmation Hearings. She spoke on behalf of Ed Morin, who was also confirmed and will be serving another 5-year term. She extended her thanks to Tom Keller and Ed Morin, who spoke on her behalf without notice, and to those who confirmed her. Two new board members were also confirmed and will join soon. They are Michael Thurston from Congressional District 2 and Grace Dunton, who will replace Cedar Worster when her term expires in June.
- Paulette attended the Construction Committee meeting on the following dates: April 14th, April 23rd, May 1st, and May 8th. The May 8th meeting was a meeting between Fern Desjardins, Chair of the Construction Committee, and the Superintendent Association's Executive Board. Fern presented proposed changes to Ch. 61 to receive their feedback and ideas.
- April 27th, Paulette met with Dan Chuhta and Melissa Beecher to review the new arrangement between the DOE and SBE, specifically regarding the shared supervision of the office specialist.
- April 29th, Paulette attended a Zoom meeting with Tom Keller, Superintendent Perry, and Superintendent Doty to review the portfolio process and procedure. Tom has laid out a clear rollout schedule to include input from other stakeholders.

- On April 30th, Paulette attended the Career and Technical Education Committee.
- On May 4th, we had our regularly scheduled agenda review meeting, and Paulette also attended the NASBE Exchange.
- On May 9th, Paulette attended and spoke at the opening/ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the Mountain Valley Community School. They built one school combining their middle and elementary schools, along with creating space for CDS and preschool programming. The school was well thought out and simply lovely without extravagance.

Vice Chair, Thomas Keller

- On 26 April, 2026, Tom began gathering SBE questions of the MDOE.
- On 4 May, 2026, Tom participated in the agenda review meeting with MDOE.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

Fern Desjardins stated that the School Construction Committee met on April 14, 23, and May 1, 2026.

The last three meetings of the School Construction Committee were focused on reviewing and drafting changes for amendments to *Chapter 61: State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects*. Progress was made in drafting a state and local cost sharing for projects based on percentages of the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) local share percentage. The team also reached consensus on changes to items in Sections 9-12, which deal with the funding of school construction projects. The School Construction Chapter 61 Team, which includes SBE School Construction Committee members and MDOE School Facilities staff and consultants, have a number of items tabled for further consideration in Sections 1-12.

Fern made a presentation on the current draft of changes to Chapter 61 to the MSSA Executive Committee on May 8 and she is scheduled to make a similar presentation at the Maine Small Schools Coalition meeting on May 18 at the University of Maine. She is receiving more emails with public comments for consideration by the Chapter 61 Team since Robbie Feinberg, Director of Communication and Government Relations, MSMA, re-shared information regarding the ongoing work to revise Chapter 61 and her subsequent presentation to the MSSA Executive Committee members.

The next Committee meeting will be held on May 15. The team will begin discussions on Sections 13-15. Future meeting dates include:

Wednesday, May 27, 9:00-12:00, Room 500

Friday, June 12, 9:00-2:00, Room 500

Friday, June 26, 9:00-12:00, Room 500

NASBE

Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):

Fern and Chair Bonneau attended the April 13 and May 4 NASBE Exchanges. Federal updates from Foresight Law + Policy were provided at both sessions.

- On April 13, Alex Perry spoke of President Trump's FY27 budget request to Congress on April 3 and the program shifts at the US DOE. The US DOE is moving to a new location on 500 D Street SW and the Department of Energy will be moving into the DOE's current location at 400 Maryland Ave SW.
- At the May 4th Exchange, Reg Leichty spoke about US Secretary of Education Linda McMahon's testimony at the subcommittee hearing for "A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the Department of Education." Leichty also spoke about the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through the "A Stronger Workforce for America Act of 2026" bill. It would transfer the administration of Title II adult programs to the US Department of Labor. Leichty further reported that the assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education announced to state education chiefs on April 17 that federal education program funds will continue to flow through the U.S. Department of Education's grant portal this summer. This includes programs like Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. They are not ready to move the funds through the U.S. Department of Labor, where most federal K-12 programs are shifting.
- The April Exchange also provided an opportunity for NASBE staff members to talk about projects they are currently working on.
- The May Exchange provided members the opportunity to share what their state boards are working on and to learn from each other.

The Board of Directors met on April 20.

- Renee Lang, Communications Director, provided an overview of her work.
- Directors reviewed the Quarter 1 revenues and expenditures, NASBE & CEO Goals, and NASBE Project Updates.

- NASBE Officer Elections and Awards processes were discussed. May 18, 2026 is the last day to submit recommendations for the 2026-2027 NASBE Board of Directors officer elections and the annual awards.
- Area directors, affiliate directors, and committee directors reported out.
- Directors discussed a proposal for a change in the NASBE Delegate Assembly. They voted unanimously to pilot a virtual Delegate Assembly for 2026. It was suggested that it take place on the Monday of the week following the conclusion of the Annual Conference.
- Lastly, Directors discussed how state board members could help with new state recruitments and sponsor recruitments.

The May 2026 edition of NASBE's *State Education Standard* was emailed to the membership on May 5. The articles focus on "Reimagining the Roles of Teachers and Leaders" to uplift school and student success. They highlight ways of "restructuring staffing and instruction to make teaching more manageable and rewarding." Strategies include teacher residencies, revolutionizing the principalship, and AI innovation.

Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):

The Certification and Higher Education (C&HE) Committee met on April 22, 2026.

- Tom presented the highlights of the meeting of 25 March, 2026, Certification and Higher Education (C&HE) Committee. Vicky Cohen, Denham Ward and Tom Keller were in attendance, and Craig Flowers, Staff Board of Education.
- Classic Planning Academy - Tom moved to recommend temporary approval through the end of the 2025-26 academic year to the full State Board, based on the Commissioner's report dated March 9, 2026, Vicky seconded the motion and it was accepted unanimously.
- Beal University - Denham was the SBE Observer and will be back for the full SBE meeting at which this will be discussed.
- Northeastern University's Roux Institute - The committee also discussed the Northeastern University's Roux Institute report, which is nearing completion with Michael working on final iterations. We expect to have that for the next C&HE Committee meeting.
- UM and UMM mid-cycle review - Review went well including a zoom with 4 student teachers who were glowing about the support the UMM faculty provide. Michael reported on the successful completion of the UM Farmington CAEP accreditation process, which took place on April 18th,

and noted that the outcome was positive with a final decision expected in May.

- MEIS summary - Michael presented March certification data showing 2,503 applications processed, though this was slightly down compared to the previous year. 498 initial teacher certification applications were processed and 2 retired teachers were re-certified. Turnaround time has slipped to 4-5 weeks as the office is shorthanded after one member recently gave birth. In addition the fingerprinting vendor is moving to sell the company and where fingerprinting reports used to take days, they now take 3-4 weeks. Wendy Kostenbauder from the Maine Department of Labor joined the meeting to share updates on their education apprenticeships program and EdTech process, with Vicky requesting a future presentation about these initiatives.
- CHRC violations report. The meeting focused on updates regarding CHRC violation reports and a new law, LD 2192, affecting covered investigations by local school districts. Michael explained that the backlog of 935 cases was due to system transitions, but measures were being taken to address it, including reallocating staff resources.
- Certifications violations report. Michael said he would have a report for next month.
- Dr. Flynn Ross from the University of Southern Maine discussed the Teacher Educator Alliance of Maine's recent meeting at Bates College and shared information about collecting data on job placements of alumni, noting challenges in gathering accurate data without a centralized database. This data point was requested on the Annual EPP report but probably will not be universally completed. Katie Rybakova shared details about a recent Girls in Science Day event at Thomas College, which involved 102 students and pre-service teachers collaborating on science experiments. Flynn reported that USM was hosting a Lego robotics camp during vacation week.
- Chapter 115 - The status of Chapter 115 was discussed. One of the new pieces is the local portfolio option. It was reemphasized that this option is for career changers and those certified educators who are seeking additional endorsements; it is not the intent that this pathway be traveled by people with only a high school diploma. There seems to be three pieces to this new practice; how the SBE approves the local portfolio, the components and process of the local portfolio, and how the MDOE will review and accept the final portfolio. Some discussion ensued regarding outreach to local credentialing committees and SAUs. Michael said he would look at what was done last time.

- Chapter 114 - Tom encouraged the members of TEAMe to gather information on EPP standards across the nation and internationally. Michael's colleagues across the nation, NASBE and the TEAMe members can all be sources. A question was raised about statutory authority, and the AG's office has said it is defensible but weak.
- Tom reminded the group that the next meeting is May 27.
- The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 pm.

Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee met virtually via Zoom on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

- Under New Business the Committee considered the Third Quarterly Perkins Grant report and also the FY 27 Perkins annual state budget. CTE Director Dwight Littlefield noted that the State has received the same amount of Perkins funding this year as last and indicated that that doesn't mean each CTE will receive the same amount of money as last year because of changes in census data. He also noted that the table included with the FY 27 exhibit shows estimates provided by the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, or OCTAE. Dwight says we are seeing estimates because the state and federal fiscal years are different and that the state gets a portion of its funding in June and the rest in October. The CTE Committee approved both Exhibits and sent them to the full board which will consider them later in this meeting. Dwight also reported that there was just under \$267,000 in the Briggs Trust available for distribution.
- CTE Team Member Shawn Legasse offered a workshop presentation on Perkins V performance indicators focusing on secondary CTE: These include Four-year graduation rate, Academic Proficiency in Reading/Language Arts, Academic Proficiency in Mathematics, Academic Proficiency in Science, Post-Program Placement, Non-traditional Program Concentration and Program Quality-Attained Post Secondary Credit. As the organization Advanced CTE observes on its website, Perkins V, like most other federal education and workforce development legislation, expects positive outcomes in exchange for federal funding. Shawn explained that in earlier iterations of Perkins, Maine DOE controlled Performance indicator levels and that all CTE's were judged against the state's performance which put smaller CTE's at a disadvantage because of

a lack of resources. With Perkins V the CTE's control their targets with the CTE's being judged against themselves.

- We'll be having a presentation on post-secondary CTE indicators at our next CTE Committee meeting.
- Under reports and Updates Dwight Littlefield reports that they were going to conduct their final review of the year in the coming week at Region 10 in Brunswick. They are also finishing up establishing Regional Advisory Groups across the state with the support of Educate Maine and the Melmac Foundation.
- MACTE President Bill Tracy reported that their Student of the Year celebration was taking place at EMCC during which an outstanding student from each of the 27 CTE's is honored and receive \$1500 scholarships courtesy of Maine Blue Collar and MEMIC. He reported that MACTE, in addition to changing its leadership structure, is moving from conducting a capital campaign to an endowment campaign to support CTE professionals across the state. They also plan to set up a certification committee with a focus on the portfolio process.
- Mercedes Pour from the Maine Community College System noted that the Free Community College legislation passed, something that she say was the result of a real grassroots effort. She says the Community College System was also runner up for a grant with a national group that's called Education Design Labs which will help the Community College System work on it's CTE Pathways.
- CTE Directors attending the meeting said they were putting together ceremonies to honor their students and also trying to deal with wait-list and space issues as well as bringing on new faculty for next year. They are also building relationships with business and agencies to help better educate their students, for example working with a local fire department to prepared firefighting students.
- Kate Howell from Educate Maine said that the announcement for the next Maine Spark ten-year goal would be the following Tuesday. Checking the Maine Spark website, I see that the new goal is that by 2035 to see that 70% of Mainers hold postsecondary credentials.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

The committee has not met formally.

- Pa-ulette reported that they have been busy with Chapter 115, and it looks like it will pass.

- Paulette reported that the LD1819 act regarding of school construction was engrossed in the Senate.

Student Membership (Edmond Morin): No report. Student membership process is complete until the end of the year.

Student voices (Cedar Worster, Abbey Hamilton, and James Ford):
The Student Voices Committee met on May 11, 2026

- Student cabinet met yesterday, May 11, 2026. This was the first of two student Bright Spot meetings. Bright Spot videos were presented. Dan Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner, was in attendance.
- Cedar announced she would be attending Bates College in the fall. Abby announced she would be attending a Model UN conference at USM's Gorham campus this week.
- Board members offered additional congratulations to Cedar on her college decision and discussed the logistics of her graduation for the board. There was a brief discussion clarifying the location of the May Board meeting, which will be held in Skowhegan.

Numeracy Advisory Council (Victoria Cohen):

- Beth Lambert and Vicky met on March 13th to discuss logistics for our upcoming Numeracy Advisory Council meeting.
- The Numeracy Advisory Council met on May 4th in Augusta.
- We heard Beth's overview of the DOE's Numeracy work so far. We discussed a variety of issues such as how teachers might respond to the Numeracy Playbook, to how we might contribute as an Advisory Council.
- Vicky met with Beth Lambert on May 13th to discuss possible ways for the Council to be of service to the DOE.
- The NAC needs two new members, so we will put forth the application again.
- We discussed the main focus of the Council – to advise, rather than doing the PD work. We can continue to give feedback because the Numeracy Playbook is a living, changeable document.

Charter Commission Representatives (Thomas Keller and James Ford):

The Maine Charter School Commission met Wednesday, May 13, 2026.

- Welcome new members Vicky Cohen and Jeremy Ray. Vicky will be joining the School Performance Committee and Jeremy will join the Finance Committee
- A nominations committee will be formed to gather a slate for the Chair and Vice Chair positions.
- Multiple policies were adopted as the MCSC transitions into a public instrumentality.
- The Commission approved an innovative grant project from the Baxter academy for a summer learning program.

Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward): *Currently absent.*

UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS:

Committees - Chapter VII, Board Of Education Policy and Procedures Manual – sent out in recent packets for today’s board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Receipt of Beal University’s Application for Additional Degree Authorization Program Review Team Report in Accordance with Rule 149
- Temporary Approval of Colassic Planning Academy, Pursuant to 20-A MRS §10703 and Rule Chapter 149, Subsection 2(F)
- Request approval of the Quarterly Report of the Maine Carl D. Perkins Grant as authorized under the Exhibit Perkins Quarterly report
- Request Approval of the FY27 Maine State Budget of the Maine Carl D. Perkins Grant as authrozied under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224)
- Appointment of James Ford to continue on the Maine Charter School Commission
- Receipt of Review Committee Report of Findings Concerning the Application from Northeastern University; Approval of Programs Offered by an Out-of-State Institution in Accordance with Rule Chapter 149

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Superintendent Conference is coming up at the end of June, 2026. In the past, board members have attended. Comes out of board funds. Will be held in Bar Harbor.

- The next regular State Board Business meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 1:00 PM at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, in Augusta Skowhegan and virtually via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

The May 9, 2026 State Board of Education meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by
Craig Flowers, Office Specialist II
State Board of Education