



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 March 12, 2025, at the Burton Cross State Office Building. The following members were present: Chair Fern Desjardins; Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau; Wendy Ault; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; Denham Ward; Phat Thai; and Cedar Worster.

Absent with Excuse: James Ford

Others Present: Daniel Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner; Michael Perry, Director of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; Robbie Feinburg, Director of Communications and Government Relations, MSMA; Dave Smith, Director, COGNIA; and Mary Becker, State Board of Education Temporary Staff.

CALLED TO ORDER:

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

Roll call was taken by Chair Desjardins, and she declared a quorum present.

VISION STATEMENT:

Read by student member, Phat Thai: 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 Denham Ward, seconded by Victoria Kornfield and voted six in favor with one abstention (Paulette Bonneau) to accept the February 12, 2025, minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment

STUDENT TRANSFER APPEAL:

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 Victoria Kornfield, 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 TA 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 1:58 PM.

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Thomas Keller, and voted four in favor with three members opposed (Paulette Bonneau, Edmond Morin, and Denham Ward) that given the information the State Board received, it was in TA's best interest to approve a transfer for the student to attend Augusta Public Schools for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. The transfer was approved.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, Fern Desjardins

➤ COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

- Fern nominated Denham Ward to serve on the Steering Committee of the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI). Steering Committee members are appointed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

➤ FORMATION OF OFFICE SPECIALIST SELECTION AD HOC COMMITTEE

- Fern announced the formation of an Office Specialist Selection Ad Hoc Committee to assist the MDOE with selecting a candidate to fill the office specialist vacancy of the Board. She appointed Paulette Bonneau to serve as chair and Wendy Ault and Denham Ward as members of the committee.
- Filling the office specialist vacancy will take a few weeks so Fern and Paulette met with the MDOE's resource administrator to plan for temporary services for the board and the transition of the selection process to the ad hoc

committee. Mary Becker agreed to provide services under a contract with Tri-State Staffing and began working on Monday, March 10.

- Fern received eight applications for student membership on the Board and turned those over to Ed as chair of the Student Membership Committee.
- The Governor's Commission on School Construction met virtually for their February 21st meeting. The finance and policy subcommittees have merged together so the Commission now has two instead of three subcommittees. Fern serves on the Design and Construction Subcommittee. Work began on the midpoint summary review and the "Midpoint of Summary of Issues and Options" was released for discussion on February 20.

The Commission has held special meetings on public-private partnerships (P3's), School Building Finance Authority, and four school visits were made available to members. Fern visited the Lewiston Middle School on March 7 and will tour the Andover Elementary School on March 13.

The Design and Construction Subcommittee meets every other week. They've reviewed design and construction planning, standards, and processes.

Regulations in building inclusive and supportive schools and an introduction to Universal Design for Accessibility were part of the February 28 agenda, as well as debt service and the Essential Programs and Services funding model.

Fern had a 1-1 virtual meeting with Valerie Landry, Chair of the Commission, on February 17. Chair Landry wanted to discuss the possibility of improving efficiency with the 21-step school construction process, exploring whether or not having an authority would help, and short and long-term goals for the Commission.

- The Key State Leaders to Advance Strategies for Eliminating Educator Shortages met on March 5. The three workgroups reported out on their meetings, focusing on existing efforts, the Teach Maine Framework, needs for going forward, innovative ideas, and next steps with goals and timelines.
- Fern attended the Annual Teacher Gala honoring the 2024 County Teachers of the Year and the 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year on March 8 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Bangor. She assisted in the awards presentations to the 2025 Teacher of the Year Semifinalists and State Finalists. Teachers were highly recognized for their dedication to PK-12 education in Maine.

Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- Paulette attended our Agenda Review meeting on February 2, 2025, and on February 14, 2025, she participated in the Ad Hoc Committee to refine the Student Transfer Appeal further.
- On February 21st, Paulette attended the Construction Committee meeting. She looks forward to future discussions regarding the recent MEPRI Report and the summary of the Building Inventory data.

- Paulette and Fern met with Matt Vaughan to move our Office Specialist II position hiring. We can begin reviewing applications after March 13. Paulette will chair this committee, assisted by Wendy Ault, Dedham Ward, and Dan Chuhta. Questions have been submitted, and they await approval.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

The School Construction Committee met on February 21, 2025.

The meeting was held to provide committee members with updates and an opportunity to ask questions on the following:

- Governor's Commission on School Construction
- Inventory Report by MEPRI
- Status of Site Visits for the MCSC 2024-2025 Rating Cycle
- Discussion of Integrated, Consolidated 9-16 Educational Facilities Program Funding Opportunity
- School Construction Bills in the Legislature

The meeting resulted in a request to Commissioner Makin that she consider moving the application deadline for the Integrated, Consolidated 9-16 Educational Facilities Program from June 30, 2025 to December 19, 2025. She agreed to announce the new deadline.

Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):

The Certification and Higher Education (C&HE) Committee met on February 26, 2025.

- Michael Perry, Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, provided an update on EPPs annual report due on April 7, 2025.
- Michael noted a proposed slate of reviewers for the upcoming Colby College review. This item is on today's agenda for review and approval. James Ford will be the State Board observer for this review.
- Michael also presented the January 2025 numbers, highlighting that it was the busiest January for applications processed in the last four years.
- Dr. Sherry Pineau Brown from Colby College presented a report on TEAME and EPP.
- Relative to LD 2222, the amendment of Chapter 115, the remainder of the committee meeting focused on refining the language and definitions in a draft document related to credentialing and education. Thomas will compile

all changes to the draft and will send to the full Board for review at the March 12 SBE meeting.

Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):

The CTE committee met via Zoom on Thursday morning February 27, 2025.

- Melissa Sherwood from DOE reported that there was \$251,934.83 in the Briggs Trust Fund. She also reported that DOE had requested and were granted a one-month extension for filing their CAR, Comprehensive Annual Report, because fiscal reports weren't going to be ready on time. Melissa says this is not an uncommon request among states.
- DOE CTE Director Dwight Littlefield reported that there was a great turnout for their annual Hall of Flags event. He says they are putting together professional development materials to share with CTE Directors. Dwight says they will be asking for SBE support as they update their catchment area information including updating student enrollments. These are the populations of school districts that send their students to each CTE Center or Region. He says that hasn't been done since 2002 and, while there's not been a lot of movement, some Districts have changed their names and things like that. There's no firm date on when that might happen and plans are to update every five years going forward. Dwight reports that a CTE Southern Maine Regional Advisory Group has been created and they were to bring it to other parts of the state. They have developed externships for CTE instructors. They plan to pilot in June. Also, they are meeting with OCTAE, the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education to provide updates to the state plans and accountability measures.
- Also, funds from a \$20 million equipment and minor infrastructure bond will be available in May. He says CTE's applied for a little more than \$8.5 million dollars. He says a big reason that so much money was not applied for was the Maine Municipal Bank requirement that the requests go out to referendum in each of the communities in the CTE's catchment area which, in some cases, could be more than three dozen communities. All the requests were approved.
- Amanda Peterson, Director of United Technologies in Bangor reports that they are in enrollment season and that they are trying to hold monthly career fairs with an eye toward summer employment, jobs after graduation or next steps for college.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

The Legislative Action Committee met on February 7 and February 28, 2025.

The bills the Board is taking action on are as follows:

- LD 323: An Act to Fund Staff Support for the State Board of Education (support)
- LD 218: An Act to Make Student Transfer Agreements Renew Automatically Except in Certain Circumstances (oppose)
- LD 696: An Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Program (NFNA)
- LD 369: An Act to Grant or Extend Conditional Teaching Certificates Under Certain Circumstances (oppose)

Student voices (Phat Thai, Cedar Worster, and James Ford):

The Student Voices Committee met on March 10, 2025.

- The committee discussed what to include in Phat and Cedar's Math presentation to the State Board during the workshop session on March 12.
- Phat and Cedar attended the Commissioner's Student Cabinet meeting on February 13 via zoom.

Student Membership (Edmond Morin):

- The deadline for receiving Student Membership Applications was February 28. This year we accepted applications from students whose schools are in the First Congressional District.
- We received 8 applications. Regrettably one application was from a Second District student, so we have 7 applications to review. We've decided this year to interview all seven applicants. Members of the Student Membership Committee will be meeting in person in Augusta and the seven applicants will be interviewed on Zoom with 30 minutes being allotted for each interview. After the interviews are done, the committee will decide which three applicants to submit to the Governor who will make the final decision on who'll be joining the State Board of Education for the next two years.
- In the coming days James, Phat, Mary and Ed, will decide the best day to hold the interviews

Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee (Fern Desjardins):

- The Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee met with MSSA superintendent representatives, their Executive Director, the Director of Communications and Government Relations, and Deputy Commissioner Chuhta on February

14. They worked off Fern's draft of February 9, which included the State Board's feedback from the February 12 workshop as well as comments from Sarah Forster. Edits also took place from suggestions received in emails. The Board's Legislative Action Committee agreed to move forward with the current draft at their February 28th meeting and so did the MSSA's Legislative Committee at their March 4th meeting. The amendments to the original bill will be presented when the LD is assigned and the bill goes for a hearing with the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. Further written comments on the current draft can be given to any of the ad hoc committee members.

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

The Charter Commission met on March 11, 2025.

- Two schools have sent in applications for the tenth Charter School slot.
- The Charter School Commission is re-organizing to become semi-autonomous.
- CRCS has been put on an improvement plan.
- The next meeting is April 8.

Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):

The Professional Standards Board has not met since February 5, 2025.

NASBE:

Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):

- Fern attended the NASBE Member Engagement Committee meetings of February 18 and March 10. The committee provides feedback on the NASBE Exchange meetings, reviews survey responses from participants, and makes revisions to the Exchange format to increase member participation.
- As Secretary-Treasurer of NASBE, Fern held her first Finance and Audit Committee meeting of the year on February 26. They reviewed the FY2024 End-of-Year Report and had a recap of the FY2025 budget. Revenues for FY2024 were 21% over the original budget and expenditures came in 8% below the original budget. The committee began working on a dues plan with a slight increase in 2026.
- Fern attended the second NASBE Exchange on March 3. There were 33 in attendance, including NASBE staff members. Participants had a quick federal overview with Reg Leichty of Foresight Law + Policy, went in regional breakout rooms with their respective area directors and NASBE area liaisons, and concluded with a general session facilitated by Byron Ernest, Chair-Elect. The next Exchange will be held on Monday, April 7 at 4:00 pm.

- The *NASBE Communications: Marching Forward with NASBE's Member Newsletter* was released March 7 via email. Stay informed about NASBE's resources, program offerings, research data, federal updates, etc. by reading the monthly updates.

Government Affairs Committee (Thomas Keller):

The committee did not meet in March 2025.

Public Education Positions Committee (Paulette Bonneau):

The committee did not meet in March 2025.

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 and has been re-approved in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. 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 second report for FY2025.

RECOMMENDATION: The State Board of Education approve the Quarterly report for the period of October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, 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 Paulette Bonneau, and unanimously voted by those present to approve the Quarterly report for the period of October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, of the State of Maine Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224). The motion was adopted.

DELEGATING THE OFFICE SPECIALIST II AD HOC COMMITTEE THE JOB OF ASSISTING THE MDOE WITH SELECTING A CANDIDATE TO FILL THE STAFF VACANCY

MOTION by Denham Ward, seconded by Paulette Bonneau, and unanimously voted by those present to delegate the Office Specialist II Ad Hoc Committee the job of assisting the MDOE with selecting a candidate to fill the staff vacancy. The motion was adopted.

COLBY COLLEGE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

BACKGROUND: Colby College's Educator Preparation Program (EPP) is reaching the end of its current approval cycle. The program has indicated its desire to renew State Board approval for its existing programs and to seek approval in three new programs. Colby College has prepared the requisite self-study materials in advance of an in-person review.

State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114: Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel lays out the process by which educator preparation programs are approved in Maine. The chapter defines a review team as, "A team of educators recommended to the State Board of Education by the Commissioner". Subsection 3.4 ("Preparation of the Self-Assessment") further explains that a "Review Team will consist of 4-5 team members, plus the MDOE consultant and a State Board of Education Observer".

The following individuals have agreed to serve on the Colby College EPP Review Team:

Linda Fuller, M. Ed, Co-Director of Educational Studies, College of the Atlantic (Chair)

Justin Dimmel, PhD, Associate Dean for Academics & Student Engagement,
University of Maine
Evan Mooney, PhD, Assistant Professor & Clinical Director of Teacher Education,
Husson University
Christina O'Neal, PhD, Educator Excellence Coordinator, Maine Department of
Education
Rachel Sommerville, EdD, Associate Professor & Program Chair of Art Education,
Maine College of Art & Design

Non-voting observers of the Colby College EPP Review will include the following:

James E. Ford, State Board of Education
Laura Cyr, PhD, Maine Department of Education
Michael T. Perry, Maine Department of Education

Pursuant to Rule Chapter 114, Subsection 3.5(a), this review team is hereby
“submitted to the State Board for approval prior to visitation”.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Rule
Chapter 114, Subsection 3.5(a), approve Dr. Linda Fuller of the College of the
Atlantic, Dr. Justin Dimmel of the University of Maine, Dr. Evan Mooney of Husson
University, Dr. Christina O'Neal of the Department of Education, and Dr. Rachel
Sommerville of the Maine College of Art & Design to serve on the review team for
the Colby College Educator Preparation Program Review, with Dr. Fuller serving as
chair and Mr. Ford serving as State Board of Education observer.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted
by those present to approve Dr. Linda Fuller of the College of the Atlantic, Dr.
Justin Dimmel of the University of Maine, Dr. Evan Mooney of Husson University,
Dr. Christina O'Neal of the Department of Education, and Dr. Rachel Sommerville
of the Maine College of Art & Design to serve on the review team for the Colby
College Educator Preparation Program Review, with Dr. Fuller serving as chair and
Mr. Ford serving as State Board of Education observer. The motion was adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Submit expense account vouchers to Mary Becker by the 15th day following
the month of the expenses incurred. When you have your last meeting in
March, please submit your expense voucher so it can get processed.
- The next regular State Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 9,
2025, at 1:00 PM at the Burton Cross State Office Building and virtually via
Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by
Mary Becker, Temporary Staff
State Board of Education