



## **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 April 9, 2025, at the Burton Cross State Office Building. The following members were present: Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau; Wendy Ault; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; and Denham Ward. James Ford attended the meeting via zoom.

Absent with Excuse: Chair Fern Desjardins, Phat Thai, and Cedar Worcester

Others Present: Michael Perry, Director of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; and Mary Becker, State Board of Education Temporary Staff.

### **CALLED TO ORDER:**

Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Roll call was taken by Mary Becker, and Vice Chair Bonneau declared a quorum present.

### **VISION STATEMENT:**

Read by member, Edmond Morin: 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:**

Vice Chair Bonneau added an item to the agenda under New Business - Board Retreat Discussion as item IX.B.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

MOTION by Wendy Ault, seconded by Denham Ward and unanimously voted by those present to accept the March 12, 2025, minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mallory Cook, speaking as a Bangor resident, praised the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services for their initiative recognizing early childhood educators during the Week of the Young Child.

## **OFFICER'S REPORTS:**

### **Chair, Fern Desjardins**

- **APPOINTMENT OF A NOMINATION AND ELECTION COMMITTEE FOR CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE BOARD**
  - Chair Desjardins appointed Wendy Ault as Chair of the Nomination and Election Committee with James Ford and Victoria Kornfield as members of the Committee. James was appointed Election Clerk. The Committee will submit a slate of officers at the May 14, 2025 business meeting and the Board will vote at the June 11 meeting. Officers will begin their duties on July 1. Nomination forms for the chair and vice chair positions will be emailed to all members of the board by Mary Becker, temporary administrative assistant for the State Board.
- She attended Legislative Action Committee meetings on March 14, 21, 28, and April 4 to discuss legislative bills.
  - March 18 – Fern testified in Support of LD 323, An Act to Fund Staff Support for the State Board of Education. She thanked Tom for also testifying on the bill and Ed for attending the public hearing. She also recognized Paulette for attending the work session on March 25. The bill was voted 11 Ought to Pass as amended and 2 Ought Not to Pass, Divided Report. The amendment was to allocate \$50,000 in ongoing funds for contracted services.
  - April 2 – Fern testified virtually at the public hearings for LD 218, An Act to Make Student Transfer Agreements Renew Automatically Except in Certain Circumstances and LD 607, An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units. Both of her testimonies were Against the bills presented at the hearings, and she requested that the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee not schedule work sessions on the two bills until the public hearing for LR 1437, An Act Regarding Superintendent Agreements for Transfer Students is heard. That bill was requested by the State Board and MSSA from the work of the Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee and Board review at the March 12 meeting.
- The Governor's Commission on School Construction met virtually on March 21. Members who participated in school visits reported out to the Commission. Fern reported on her visits to Lewiston Middle School and Andover Elementary

School.

The Commission discussed the First Draft of the Commission's Interim Report. The second draft is in progress and will be submitted to meet the April 15 deadline; however, the Commission has been approved to continue its work after the 15th.

- The Recruitment and Retention Workgroup for the Key State Leaders to Advance Strategies for Eliminating Educator Shortages Committee met on March 24. The group drafted three priorities and action steps for meeting them.

#### **Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau**

- Paulette attended the Agenda Review meetings on March 3, and March 31, 2025, prior to the March and April monthly Board meetings.
- On March 21st, she attended the School Construction Committee meeting.
- She attended the CTE Committee meeting on March 27.
- On March 28th, Paulette reviewed potential applicants resumes for the Office Specialist II position. She was joined by Deputy Commissioner Chuhta, Wendy Ault and Denham Ward. They selected 7 from a pool of 21 applicants. Two applicants withdrew. They interviewed applicants on April 3rd. References are currently being checked. This has consumed much of her time for the month.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### ***School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):***

The School Construction Committee met on March 21.

- The committee received updates and discussed the following:
  - Governor's Commission on School Construction
  - Status of Site Visits for the MCSC 2024-2025 Rating Cycle
  - School Construction Bills in the Legislature

##### ***Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):***

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

- Higher education update was provided by Michael Perry. He shared updates on the Colby EPP review and Beal University's degree granting authorization review. He also mentioned the upcoming EPP reviews for the fall. Tom asked Michael about pertinent legislation pertaining to higher education and Michael replied that several bills are in the hopper but funding remains uncertain.
- Michael noted that 2,260 applications were processed for February 2025, noting a dip from January due to fewer days. He also presented statistics collected by Erin including incoming calls, outgoing calls and pages of documentation processed. The team discussed the trends in initial teaching applications and certifications, with February numbers lower than January but still above pre-pandemic levels. Tom inquired about the new MEIS system, which is not yet

installed, and requested data on endorsements and special education certifications. Michael agreed to provide more detailed endorsement data at the next meeting. The discussion then moved to CHRC violations, which are slowly decreasing, and certification violation reports, which are facing some data integration challenges.

- Denham briefly mentioned ongoing work on a regional longitudinal data study.
- Dr. Justin Dimmel reported on several initiatives and updates from the University of Maine's Educator Alliance. Justin shared information about the UMS Residency initiative to address teacher shortages, a congressionally designated spending project for rural districts, and a Summer Educators Institute. The institute includes a special focus on elementary mathematics education, aiming to develop numeracy skills and mathematical agency among teachers. Tom expressed the Board's interest in elementary math and discussed the importance of high-quality instructional materials.
- The committee then began to review Chapter 115, Part II.

### ***Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):***

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

- Ed reported that he had the opportunity to attend the SkillsUSA event held in Bangor, primarily at the United Technology Center, which is the CTE located in Bangor. Young people, staff and judges from across the state travelled to several venues in Bangor to compete in a variety of disciplines, everything from carpentry, health care, metal sculpture, plumbing, wedding cake decoration, etc. He enjoyed watching students utilizing their education and skills.
- DOE Perkins Fund manager Melissa Sherwood reported that the CTE Committee will receive the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Perkins financial report at its next meeting. On-site Perkins monitoring has resumed to be sure schools are in compliance.
- DOE CTE Director Dwight Littlefield reported that their Consolidated Annual Report was submitted and they are awaiting approval from the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. They are in the process of putting out the State Plan and starting school reviews and watching any bills that are CTE related.
- Mercedes Pour from the Community College System stated the Maine Aspirations Program, which pays for the majority of dual and concurrent enrollment in Maine has exceeded its budgeted amounts, leading to a credit limit of 18 credits for high school students, with an exception of 24 credits for CTE students. This change will take effect with current sophomores. The decision to implement the credit limit was made by the Maine Department of Education, with input from the community college system.
- Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education Executive Director Dave Keaton reported on the Skills USA event. He is in the process of collecting student submissions for the May 3, 2025, CTE Student of the Year Celebration at EMCC.

- Kate Howell from Educate Maine updated the committee on their recruitment for the next ELE, (Education Leader's Experience) Cohort. She also provided an update on the Teach Maine Center that the Department of Education and Educate Maine have partnered and developed. According to the Educate Maine website this is designed to unite and empower educators to incubate strategies aligned with the Teach Maine Plan. Paulette Bonneau requested a report on apprenticeship development for the next CTE Committee meeting, which Kate agreed to provide.
- As part of Reports from the Field Amanda Peterson who is President of MACTE and Director of United Technology Center in Bangor discussed the enrollment process for their programs, noting that they had shut off enrollment for most programs but were still accepting applications for some. For example, a new teacher program in Bangor has attracted about 100 applicants, with only 40 spots available. Amanda updated the Committee on the progress of the projects awarded bond money and shared the uncertainty surrounding budget cuts and the potential impact on high school programs.
- Bobby Deetjen, Director of the Mid-Coast School of Technology in Rockland announced the upcoming launch of an entrepreneurship program for former students, which will run as a full year course with community college credits. Kevin Lavoie, Director of the St. John Valley Technology Center in Frenchville discussed the challenges of funding for students participating in Skills USA Nationals, mentioning that fundraising efforts are collaborative and involve the schools. He also reported that CNA testing and ELOs had been completed.

***Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):***

The Legislative Action Committee met on March 3, March 7, March 14 and March 21, 2025.

- Paulette attended the workshop on March 18, 2025, to support LD 323: An Act To Fund Staff Support for the State Board of Education.
- The Committee has reviewed the following bills:
  - LD 803 An Act to Address Certification Violations for School Staff
  - LD 854 An Act to Provide Equitable Capital Construction Funding for Maine's Charter Schools
  - LD 826 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund
  - LD 1163 An Act to Foster Career and Technical Education in Maine Schools by Creating an Additional Pathway to Certify Industrial Arts Teachers - testify against
  - LD 1087 An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major Capital School Construction Costs
  - LD 1256 An Act to Support Healthy Meal Programs in Maine Schools by Allowing the School Revolving Renovation Fund to Make Loans to Repair

- and Renovate School Kitchens and Cafeterias
- LD 1089 An Act to Permanently Fund 55 Percent of the State's Share of Education by Establishing a Tax on Incomes of More than \$1,000,000
- LD 972 An Act to Change the Entity for Operating the Career & Technical Education Center in Machias to Regional School Unit 37 testify - NFNA
- LD 1117 An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce Through Certified Pre-apprenticeship Training Programs-monitor
- All construction related bills are deferred to Fern for her direction.

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

The Student Voices Committee met on April 7, 2025.

- Student members have received a MEPRI report and have been asked to do a presentation on their findings.
- Neither Phat nor Cedar were in attendance for today's meeting.
- Cedar was inducted as the Maine National Honor Society State Representative and had an all-day meeting. Phat was taking a final for his class at USM.
- The Commissioner's Student Cabinet has not met since the March 12 State Board meeting.

***Student Membership (Edmond Morin):***

The Student Membership Committee met in the Cross Building on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, to interview by Zoom the seven First Congressional District high school sophomores who applied to become the next student member of the Maine State Board of Education. Their task, in addition to conducting interviews, was to choose three of the applicants to submit to the Governor who makes the nomination. Mary Becker delivered the nomination packet to the Governor's office. For Ed, this was not an easy decision as he felt that any of the students would have been excellent choices. He thanked Phat, James, Mary and Emily for all their hard work in the effort. It's an intense process, but one, Ed thinks will lead to pretty amazing results. Ed will let the State Board know as soon as he learns which of the three young people has been nominated by the Governor. He plans to testify on the nominee's behalf at their public hearing.

***Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee (Fern Desjardins):***

The ad hoc committee has not met since Fern's last update to the State Board at the March 12 meeting.

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

The Charter Commission met on April 8, 2025.

- Victoria Kornfield reported that the Charter Commission discussed the

applications for the tenth school slot. The Wabanaki School has withdrawn their application. The Commission has moved forward with the Moxie School, with more steps in the process. The Commission will interview the school in the Portland area in April. The Commission will vote on the Moxie School in May.

- Amy Allen gave a report on two data projects she has worked on in response to unfounded criticisms. One is to show how many students withdraw and enroll during the school year. The other project is to do a side-by-side to show what assessments and reporting requirements the Charter Schools have and what the regular public schools have.

***Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):***

The Professional Standards Board did not meet.

***NASBE:***

***Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):***

- The Executive Committee met on March 19 to receive updates on President and CEO DeMaria's goals, activities of NASBE's various committees, New Member Institute scheduled for July 8-9 in Utah, and Annual Conference plans for October 27-29.
- NASBE Communications emailed all members the *April Showers Bring the NASBE Member Newsletter!* on April 5.
  - The student member featured this month is Cedar Worster, our junior member. Fern extended praises to Cedar on her insightful responses to questions in her interview with NASBE.
  - Key updates are provided from Congress, the US Department of Education, the Supreme Court, and the Executive Office.
  - State Board members are invited to respond to a survey on AI in education.
  - Plus other articles to keep NASBE members informed of activities to support their role on state boards.
- The NASBE Exchange is a monthly informal gathering of members to discuss topics of their choice and to receive short federal updates. They sometimes break into regions. Fern facilitated the April Northeast Region session. The GAC and PEP committees have been put on hold in recent months as The NASBE Exchange takes shape in addressing member interests and needs as effectively as possible. All NASBE members receive a monthly invitation to attend the exchange. Fern thanked Tom and Denham for attending the April 7 Exchange.

***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:**

**RECEIPT OF COLBY COLLEGE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM REVIEW  
TEAM REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE CHAPTER 114**

BACKGROUND: Educator preparation programs (EPPs) in Maine are approved by the State Board of Education following the guidelines laid out by Rule Chapter 114, *Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel*. Approved EPPs are able to recommend graduates for eligibility to earn certification under “Pathway 1” in Rule Chapter 115 for the specific credential areas included in their review.

A review team approved by the State Board of Education visited Colby College on March 16-18, 2025. The review team finalized consensus findings and recommendations for the State Board of Education, and a draft of their report was reviewed by Colby College staff to verify factual accuracy and to provide any feedback or response to the review team’s findings.

Now, pursuant to Rule Chapter 114, Subsection 3.11, the State Board of Education may formally receive documents to review in preparation for taking final action on Colby College’s EPP approval request.

RECOMMENDATION: That, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11, the State Board of Education receive the Colby College EPP Self-Assessment Report and Colby EPP Review Team Report prior to taking final action regarding Colby College’s Educator Preparation Program approval at the Board’s next regular meeting.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present that pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11, the State Board of Education receive the Colby College EPP Self-Assessment Report and Colby EPP Review Team Report prior to taking final action regarding Colby College’s Educator Preparation Program approval at the Board’s next regular meeting. The motion was adopted.



## **STATE BOARD RETREAT**

Board members discussed ideas for future speakers and topics for their upcoming retreat in September.

- They expressed interest in hearing from experts who can provide new perspectives on education, such as Joan Ferrini-Mundy on math education and Penny Bishop on middle school.
- They also suggested inviting superintendents from diverse districts, college presidents, and teachers of the year to discuss current challenges and successes.
- Members emphasized the need for actionable insights and ways to improve student achievement, particularly in math and reading.
- They also touched on topics like competency-based education, career and technical education, and the impact of early college classes on high school rigor.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Submit expense account vouchers to Mary Becker by the 15<sup>th</sup> day following the month of the expenses incurred. When you have your last meeting in April, please submit your expense voucher so it can get processed.
- The next regular State Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Burton Cross State Office Building and virtually via Zoom.

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.

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