



**Maine State Board of Education
Certification and Higher Education Committee
Meeting minutes
December 18, 2024**

In the meeting, Tom Keller, Chair of the Certification and Higher Ed Committee of the Maine State Board of Education, led the discussion. The committee members, Tori Kornfield and Denham Ward, introduced themselves. The meeting also featured the presence of State Board Chair, Fern Desjardin.

Others present were Dave Keaton – MACTE, Mallory Cook, Director of Training and Early Educator Engagement at the Maine Education Association, Erin Connor, Associate Dean UMF, Christina O'Neal, Educator Excellence Coordinator, Maine DOE, Daniel Chuhta, Maine DOE, Katie Rybakova, Chair of the Lunder School of Education, Thomas College, Michael Perry, Maine DOE, Larry Ronco, Director of Teacher Education Accreditation, UMF, Joan Dolan, Director of Apprenticeship and Strategic Partnerships, Maine Dept. of Labor, Sadi Rioux, MSAD#27 Recertification Committee Chair, Sarah Howorth; University of Maine Special Education Program Coordinator, Jonathan Moody, MSAD54 Superintendent of Schools and MSSA Liaison to the State Board of Education, Ezekiel Kimball - Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine, Megan London, Co-Chair of Education, EMCC, Beth Linevitch, Induction, Mentoring, Certification Coordinator, Portland Public School, Jake Langlais - Superintendent in Lewiston and representing Western Maine Superintendents (Region VI), Rose Marie Angell MAHPERD APE Committee Chair, Rebecca Edelman, Maine School Counselor Association, Flynn Ross, Prof and Chair Teacher Education at University of Southern Maine, Peter Lancia, Superintendent, Christian Elkington, Superintendent, Julia Hazel, Erin Beal, Erin Connor, Krystle Merry, UMaine, Derek Pierce, Portland

First order of business was the approval of the minutes of November 29, 2024. Tori moved for their acceptance and Denham seconded it. The vote was unanimous to approve.

Higher education

The committee discussed the Beal University Review Visit Status, with Michael Perry reporting that all parties are on the same page regarding the review.

The committee also discussed the listing of certifications offered by each EPP, with Michael Perry promising to send the list to the committee members and EPP colleagues.

The meeting also touched on the Roux Institute program review request and a new institute for architectural graduate programs. No further information is available.

Lastly, the committee discussed the dissolution of the Maine Higher Education Council and the tracking of pertinent legislation. The implications of the dissolution of the Maine Higher Education Council needs further review since it plays a specified role in Chapter 114.

Certification Team Workload and Data Challenges

Michael discussed the certification team's workload, noting that while the number of applications processed remained the same (in November 2,314 applications processed including 6 for retired teacher and 215 initial teacher certifications), the workload felt more intense due to increased individual outreach per application. He also mentioned that the team was experiencing more contact with applicants before their application was complete. Denham suggested breaking down the data to better understand trends, particularly in teacher certification levels. Michael agreed to investigate this and also mentioned the need for better data capabilities in the certification software. Tom and Christian Elkington discussed the need for more detailed data breakdowns, particularly in terms of initial teachers and their pathways.

The deadline has passed for the receipt of MEIS proposals and we can expect more information next month.

Michael also discussed the challenges of the CHRC violation report, noting that the violations list had been reduced by eliminating private schools not under CHRC clearance requirements. The team also discussed the need for better workflow in the certification system, particularly in terms of CHRC clearance. Mallory suggested geographically mapping where violations were happening to provide appropriate support.

Maine Apprenticeship Programs for Education, MDOL

In the meeting, Joan Dolan from the Department of Labor discussed the potential of apprenticeship programs in Maine, particularly in the education sector. She highlighted that apprenticeship programs can help address teacher shortages and improve retention rates. Joan also explained the structure of apprenticeship programs, emphasizing that they are competency-based and include both on-the-job training and classroom instruction. She mentioned that the programs are currently being developed in various school districts and that the goal is to create a standardized K-12 certification program through apprenticeship. The discussion also touched on the potential of apprenticeship programs to support new Americans and new Mainers in their career advancement.

EPP/TEAMe report - Maine Teacher Residency and Collaboratory

Tom welcomed Zeke Kimball, the interim Dean from the University of Maine, to discuss the Teacher Educator Alliance of Maine and new developments on the UMaine campus. Zeke shared updates about the Maine Teacher Residency, which has prepared over 100 teachers, and the Rural Educator Resilience Project, a multifaceted initiative to support educators in Maine. He also introduced the Collaboratory, an attempt to invert the model by addressing real-world problems in collaboration with school-based partners. Zeke emphasized the University of Maine's commitment to solving problems that matter for Maine communities, aligning with its Land Grant, Sea Grant, and Space Grant Institution status.

Zeke discussed concerns about the CHRC process, particularly from Northern Maine EPPs, and the development of a recommendation for the annual report of educator preparation programs. He emphasized the need to minimize the number of times different information is requested by various state, federal, and non-governmental groups. Tom expressed excitement about the Collaboratory and the draft of the annual EPP report. Denham requested the Google document link, which Ezekiel agreed to share. Michael discussed the CAEP standards for educator preparation programs and proposed that the CAEP report could satisfy the state's documentation needs. Tom agreed, noting that CAEP is the gold standard across the nation. Larry Ronco, who created the crosswalk, was thanked for his work.

Feedback on Chapter 115

Finally, Tom opened the floor for feedback on Chapter 115, encouraging meeting participants to provide written comments identifying their issues and concerns.

Mallory Cook discussed the need for accountability in the education system, particularly in retaining current educators and ensuring they obtain proper credentials. She highlighted the current language in 115, which is not being followed, and proposed a scaffolded escalation process. This includes timely communication from the department, an action plan within 30 days of recognizing violations, ongoing monitoring, and penalties for noncompliance. Mallory also suggested removing a barrier for education technicians who leave the profession and return after a certain period. Lastly, she emphasized the need for certified teachers in Maine's public charter schools. Tom appreciated Mallory's input and requested the comments be sent to him. Jake, representing the Western Maine superintendents, endorsed an alternate pathway to certification and mentioned John Moody's thoughts on the matter.

Jake expressed concerns about the quality of education provided through online and remote classes, suggesting a need for higher quality, local or regional supports and structures. He shared examples of educators who faced certification issues despite having relevant degrees and experience, and proposed a portfolio-type process aligned with industry standards. Tom agreed with Jake's points and suggested opening the door for alternative pathways without specifying the process. Flynn emphasized the need for accountability measures based on outputs and competency rather than inputs, and proposed the use of validated assessment tools like the Teacher Candidate Assessment of Performance (TCAP) for alternative certification pathways.

The meeting involved discussions about the accreditation and certification processes in medical education and their potential application to the education sector. Denham shared his experience from the medical field, highlighting the distinction between the organizations responsible for accreditation and certification. Tom and Flynn discussed the New Hampshire program and the role of the Board of Education in funding and appointing the Institute of Higher Education Network. Christian then spoke about the support for a proposed plan from RSU 9 and the importance of having teams of people assess alternative certification pathways. He also mentioned the need for statutes to be more open to allow for district expertise and collaboration with the university. The conversation ended with Tom expressing appreciation for the ideas presented and promising to move them forward as appropriate..

Rebecca, a counseling educator from Maine, expressed concerns about the certification process for school counselors. She highlighted that two individuals had received full certification without completing an aligned degree and a school counseling degree, as specified in the rules. Rebecca suggested revisiting the rules for Part 2 of Chapter 115, to ensure that only appropriately educated individuals are certified as school counselors. Tom acknowledged Rebecca's input and assured her that it would be considered. Jonathan then discussed a proposed pathway process for certification, emphasizing the importance of meaningful professional development and the potential for cost neutrality. Tom ended the conversation by outlining the next steps, including drafting a working document for the State Board and a public comment period in July.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm. The next meeting is January 22, 2025 at 10:30 am.