



Career and Technical Education Committee

Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of October 30, 2025 Meeting

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee held a meeting on October 30, 2025, virtually via Zoom. The following were present: Committee Chair Edmond Morin, Wendy Ault Committee Member, Paulette Bonneau Committee Member, Erica Tompkins State Board Office Specialist, Dwight Littlefield, State CTE Director (Department of Education), Melissa Sherwood, Perkins Grant Manager (Department of Education)

Guests: Mercedes Pour, Director of College Access and Secondary Partnerships (Maine Community College System), Bill Tracy, President of MACTE and Director of Hancock County Technical Center; Bobby Deetjen, Director, Mid-Coast School of Technology; Amanda Peterson, Director of United Technical Center; Kevin Lavoie, Director, St. John Valley Technical Center; Kate Howell, Deputy Director, Educate Maine

I. Call to Order: Edmond Morin, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05AM under the State Board's remote meeting policy.

II. Committee Chair Overview: (Edmond Morin) Ed welcomed all members and guests to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Ed noted his attendance at the CTE conference at Lewiston Regional Technical Center. He noted that, as in the past, he learned a lot and was made to feel very welcome.

Paulette reported on her attendance at a national conference in Texas. She explained that Texas career academies are integrated into the general high school structure. Their funding appeared less robust than Maine's despite Maine educators' concerns about resources. Maine students train on equipment that closely reflects what they will encounter in college or the workforce. In many other states, students must travel to community colleges to take dual enrollment classes, creating scheduling and access issues that Maine's vetted instructor system avoided.

She attended several workshops on math, looking at math pathways. Paulette noted the way Maine's system is designed with Maine CTE instructors vetted by the community college with students getting college credit while they are at the CTE. In many states the kids have to go to the community college to take those classes to get the credit. And so that's creating scheduling and other issues.

At the conference the Dana Center recognized Maine as successfully implementing math pathways. Paulette said Maine should recognize that its position is ahead of many other states. Ed asked about graduation credit in the Texas model. Paulette explained students received graduation credit for programs as part of their pathway, but they had to complete the entire pathway.

III. Adjustments to the Agenda: (Edmond Morin)

Ed adjusted the agenda, adding reports from the MACTE president and Educate Maine after the community college update, followed by reports from the field.

IV. Acceptance of Minutes: The committee then took up the minutes from its July 24th meeting. Wendy said, because of when she received the minutes, she had not had time to review them and suggested that the July minutes stand unaccepted. The committee agreed.

V. Public Comment: No public comment

VI: Standing Reports/Updates:

A: Financial Reports:

Briggs Trust/Perkins V:

Melissa reported they were wrapping up FY25 Perkins with the spend-down deadline September 30th for schools, so schools were just submitting their final reimbursements. She says CTE's have done a really great job of spending down all their funds this year. It's been a huge goal to not leave any funds left unspent. They had also just wrapped up the first quarter of FY26 and so, at that time had FY26 Perkins, Perkins Reserve, and two state grants that were out to schools. She says CTE's were starting to spend those funds.

Regarding the federal transfer of Perkins from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor, Melissa reported no disruption in FY26 funding. Schools maintained 100% access to FY 26 Perkins funding, although there's been a bit of a delay. The department was working with DOE Finance and DAPS to navigate new federal systems. She notes that there's been a reduction in the number of CTE representatives at the federal level, but Maine is still able to get in touch with its contact people.

Melissa says their team was starting to work on the comprehensive annual report, CAR, for Perkins, which is due every January.

Ed asked whether the comprehensive annual report would go to Education or Labor. Melissa explained that the Perkins portal remained active and their federal contacts at OCTAE were still responsive, despite staff reductions from six or eight representatives to two. Dwight confirmed the changes involved no interaction with Maine's state Department of Labor. There had been no state-level discussions about following the federal model.

Regarding the Briggs Trust, Melissa said, as of October 22 there was \$251,000 in available funds to be awarded. They are expecting MACTE to draw down some of those funds for its Summer Conclave. Ed noted the Briggs balance had grown substantially. He proposed forming a committee to explore different uses for Briggs funding and adding a discussion to a future agenda. Wendy and Paulette endorsed this approach.

Paulette noted they were expecting a mid-year report from MACTE in January.

B: Updates

1) State Director's Update: Dwight Littlefield says that CTE enrollments across the state stand at more than 11,000 students, that compares to 8075 in 2018. Digging into what's happening across the state he says there are 89 different programs being offered. About 78% of those enrolled in CTE are in 25 programs. The top five are CTE exploratory, which is a survey

program, primarily for freshmen and sophomores, followed by automotive programs, carpentry, culinary arts and the nursing assistant programs. The department had shifted the conversation toward adding sections of successful programs rather than starting entirely new program types.

Dwight also says that, just because a student can't get into the first program they're interested in, doesn't mean they're out in the cold, that they'll be able to get a spot in another program that interests them.

He says waitlists are complex. Directors didn't turn students away—they worked to find placements. They had data showing 70-80% of students getting their first choice, with others placed in alternatives.

Wendy asked about situations where high schools had limited slots at CTEs. Dwight said this was handled locally through discussions between directors, principals, and superintendents. The state didn't mandate specific slot allocations. These conversations were happening more frequently with better results than five or ten years ago. Dwight explained they were updating catchment areas to understand enrollment patterns. He says catchment areas were late updated in

The department were last reviewed in 2002. They needed to work at the town level using census data, then connect towns to high schools and high schools to CTEs.

The department is updating Chapter 232, Maine's CTE regulations, which haven't been revised in 45 years. In November, Laura Cyr was scheduled to facilitate a conversation at the MACTE meeting to gather director feedback. By January, they aimed to have a draft ready for public comment. The revision would consolidate four different rules into a single Chapter 232. Dwight also says the CTE Team is gearing up for school reviews.

2) Community College Update: (Mercedes Pour) Mercedes expressed her gratitude to Melissa for sending detailed narratives explaining Perkins processes. The system was interviewing for Joan DaCosta's replacement the following week, with Melissa participating. She says, in terms of their dual and concurrent enrollment space, they made a policy change so that students who are in CTE pathways would get an extra six credits in those pathways. This is a new thing for Maine. The Community College System wants it to work for its students. She says she has been able to engage closely with the student services directors, or like roles across the 27 CTEs, and they invited her to dialogue when we were at the CTE conference. So, they're definitely going to have to go back and forth and learn and tweak and make it better for the schools and the students. Recent conferences showed pathways as the field's direction—moving from accumulating credits toward intentional course-taking aligned with career goals. Mercedes says they are still in the transition phase after having introduced new computer software.

3) MACTE Report: (Bill Tracy)

Bill Tracy reported that the fall conference at Lewiston drew over 450 attendees, 14 vendors, and 34-plus sessions.

MACTE was in transition without a traditional executive director. They redirected some of the salary funds to hire Adam Provost and his Creative Ser Group for communications and administrative support.

The executive board planned to meet the following day to discuss transition and a potential capital campaign. Bill said they might need a different organizational structure with multiple positions rather than a traditional executive director. This transition was happening because MACTE was growing.

MACTE was discussing replacing the Conclave planned for next August with a summit to engage more effectively with traditional high schools and businesses. The capital campaign would help fund leadership positions while reducing the burden on schools to use Perkins funds for those positions. MACTE has established a relationship with the National Guard for meeting space. Dwight continued meeting weekly with Kevin and Bill.

MACTE remained active in Chapter 115 discussions, supporting the portfolio pathway for teacher certification while ensuring it worked for CTE instructors. They were advocating to change the requirement that endorsement hours occur within five years preceding initial application. Bill says that's hurting Ed Techs working in a program.

MACTE has set aside February 10-12 for CTE Month presentations at the Hall of Flags in Augusta, organizing by region and including the community college system. Paulette noted the State Board meets on February 12th and suggested board members visit during breaks.

Bill said there have been discussions about MACTE involvement at the DOE summit in August. Paulette asked about certification discussions regarding consistency and equity. Bill said "consortium" in the superintendents' proposal provided flexibility for both regional and center models. One of the concerns is that if MACTE proposes changes that are too substantial, adding the CTE portfolio as a piece, that it will delay the process, something they don't want.

4) Educate Maine Update: (Kate Howell)

Kate reported Educate Maine registered pre-apprenticeships with Region10 in automotive and Midcoast in carpentry. Four CTE professionals participated in the Education Leaders Experience cohort. Educate Maine also had a table at the CTE conference.

Educate Maine has launched their Maine Spark survey. They received a grant through Nellie Mae to continue the initiative and needed to establish the next goal. Their previous goal was 60% of Mainers to have a credential of value by 2025. Kate says there is about a two-year lag before they find out if that happened. In the meantime, they need to start working on a new goal. They would continue stakeholder engagement through conferences, virtual sessions, and the online survey.

Educate Maine Symposium tickets were on sale with numerous CTE sessions on the agenda.

5) Reports from the Field:

a) Bill Tracy, who's director of the Hancock County Technical Center in addition to being MACTE President, said they had their advisory dinner coming up that night with over 120, people planning to attend. He says that's something the school is really excited about, except for our space, which is a really tough fit. He says they are looking next year for a couple changes. Bill says they are exploring a Co-Op Program. They also want to get a firefighter position. He says the Ellsworth Fire Department has reserved space and has an instructor ready for them that HCTC wouldn't have to cover for a couple of years.

b) Kevin Lavoie, Director of St John Valley Technical Center says, with the approval of DOE, they are working at moving their advanced technologies to preengineering programming for a launch next year to meet a need from the business stakeholders within the region. Also looking to launch co-op programming next year. The school is working hard to acquire more homeschool students, something that seems to be successful. Also looking to launch this upcoming year a summer forest innovation program that ties in heavily with their forest management program. They've received a \$250,000 three-year grant through Brewer High School as well as the Maine tree Foundation. They were also launching a Green Jobs Fair at the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

c) Bobby Deetjen, Director of the Mid Coast School of Technology, says they were prepping for Professional Advisory Committee meetings. He says it's a challenge to get everyone into their building. They actually are talking about a meeting that evening being the last in person PAC night, just based on the fact that they have so many people coming into the space. It's also really difficult to get everyone there on the same night and get the needed information. He says they are exploring some different ways to do that. They're exploring a kind of partnership with St George and Maine Maritime Academy to create a seamless transition for their pre K through eighth grade program. It would make it pre K through 12th grade or fourteen or 16 and get students their associates degrees, and then on to get their bachelor's degrees.

d) Amanda Peterson, Director of United Technology Center says they were welcoming 650 8th graders, all the eighth graders from all 16 middle schools in their catchment area who come for an experience and tours and to spend the day. UTC will be hosting a Fusion event with young business professionals from the region through the Bangor Chamber.

They had analyzed their enrollment process since moving to EnrollTrack. Out of 778 accepted students, 19 didn't accept their spots and were dropped.

We said, if you do not get back to us by such and such a date, you will be dropped. And they were like, but I really wanted my spot. We said we're sorry but gave it to someone who was just quietly waiting but still persistent. And so, I think students are starting to realize now that they have to follow through.

They were also examining why 90-100 students dropped prior to start or within two weeks. Ed asked if Amanda would share findings analyzing attrition. Amanda agreed.

Putting on another hat, CTE Committee member and Biddeford Regional Technical Center Director Paulette Bonneau reported they are also exploring ways to handle PAC meetings. She says they have received two Anatomage Tables which the company describes as the most advanced real-human-based 3D anatomy and medical education system. These are for their Health Occupation programs. They started a small engine class for 8th graders, mostly boys but there are a few girls. Paulette said, given that 25 percent of her students have an IEP or 504 plans, she also plan to ask for funding for a special education teacher.

VII. Old Business. None

VIII. New Business:

The CTE Committee finished up its meeting with consideration of the first quarterly Perkins report for fiscal year 2026. Paulette moved to accept the Perkins report ending September 30th, 2025, for submission to the full State Board. Wendy seconded. Erica Tompkins called the roll. Paulette, Wendy, and Ed voted yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Paulette noted that, in December, the State Board would review all committees and the strategic plan was up for renewal in 2026. She wanted to encourage collaboration on future goals with MACTE and the state.

Wendy suggested adding this to the November agenda. Ed said this group has the right composition to ensure strategic plans remain relevant.

With no further business Ed adjourned the meeting at 11:34 AM.