



## **Certification and Higher Education Committee**

Maine State Board of Education  
Minutes of the March 26, 2025 Meeting

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a virtual monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, via Zoom. The following were present: Committee Chair Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; and Denham Ward (Board Members). Fern Desjardins, Chair of the State Board of Education; Michael Perry, Director of Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; and Erin Reinhard, Certification Coordinator.

Guests: Gerry Durgin, MIAAA; Jon Doty, RSU 34; Dave Keaton, MACTE; Jonathan Moody, RSU 54; Justin Dimmel, University of Maine; John Kraljic, Falmouth; Sarah Howorth, University of Maine; and Rose Angell.

Chair Thomas Keller called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. He welcomed all members and guests. Committee members introduced themselves.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of the February 26, 2025 meeting were not available for approval. The minutes will be presented at the April meeting.

### **Public Comment:**

No public comment was given.

### **Higher Education:** *(Michael Perry)*

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.

### **Certification Update:** *(Michael Perry)*

Michael Perry reported 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 Reinhard 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 Keller inquired about the new MEIS system, which is not yet installed, and requested data on endorsements and special education certifications. Michael Perry 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 Ward briefly mentioned ongoing work on a regional longitudinal data study.

### **Report from TEAMe:**

Dr. Justin Dimmel reported on several initiatives and updates from the University of Maine's Educator Alliance. Dr. Dimmel 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 Keller expressed the Board's interest in elementary math and discussed the importance of high-quality instructional materials.

### **Amendments to Chapter 115, Part II:**

The committee then began to review Chapter 115, Part II.

Tom Keller and Denham Ward discussed the need to clarify the endorsement and certification pathways in the system. They agreed that the current wording was confusing and suggested changing it to describe the endorsement pathways as specified in Part I, Section 6. Denham Ward expressed concern about the redundancy of these pathways and the need to distinguish between certificates and endorsements. Michael Perry clarified. Denham Ward raised specific questions about the conditional certificate obtained through the new portfolio pathway, questioning whether additional requirements in Part II still apply.

The committee discussed how to incorporate a new portfolio pathway for teacher certification into the existing regulations. Tom Keller suggested referencing Part I, Section 6.2 in the eligibility criteria for teacher endorsements. Jon Doty clarified that the portfolio process can lead to both

conditional and professional certification. Denham Ward pointed out the need to differentiate this new pathway from regular conditional certificates. Erin Reinhard proposed creating a separate pathway in Part II that outlines the requirements for professional certification through the portfolio process, including a bachelor's degree and exceptionalities, similar to the approved program pathway. This approach would provide clarity for educators and allow for more flexibility in evaluating portfolios against certification requirements.

The committee discussed how to incorporate new pathways for teacher certification and endorsement into the existing rules. Erin Reinhard recommended adding a new "Pathway 3" to make it clearer for educators, rather than modifying the existing pathways. The new pathway would include successfully completing a portfolio as specified in Part 1 of the rules. They also considered adding a Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) approved program and a teacher apprenticeship program as additional options. The group debated whether to include these new options under existing pathways or create separate ones, with Erin Reinhard preferring separate pathways for clarity.

The committee discussed the apprenticeship program and its integration into the education system. They considered the possibility of treating an apprenticeship program as a pathway one approved program. The team also discussed the need for clarity in the definition of a program to include apprenticeships. They proposed to modify the definition in part one of the program to cover apprenticeship programs. The team also discussed the need for dual certification and the possibility of using an apprenticeship program to satisfy the special education endorsement requirement as well as adding language to the student teaching requirement to facilitate dual certification with special education.

### **Goals for next steps**

- Michael Perry and Erin Reinhard to rewrite language for student teaching requirements to promote dual certification with special education
- Michael and Erin to draft new Pathway 3 language for endorsements by tomorrow
- Sarah to email suggested language for student teaching requirements to Tom Keller
- Tom Keller to create and send out a new draft of Part 2 with updated language to committee members and full list by Monday
- Michael Perry to propose language for including apprenticeship programs in Part 1 definitions
- Denham Ward to send suggestions on Part 2 to Tom
- Mary Becker to save and send chat transcript to Denham Ward

**Adjournment:**

The March 26, 2025, Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.