



Certification and Higher Education Committee Meeting

23 State House Station
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

STATE OF MAINE

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a meeting on August 27, 2025, via Zoom. The following members were present: Chair Thomas Keller, and members Victoria Kornfield, Denham Ward and Victoria Cohen. Others Present included Michael Perry, Katie Rybakova, Heather Perry, Dan Chuhta, Laura Cyr, Gerry Durgin, Erin Straine, Zeke Kimball, and Debra McIntyre

Chair Keller called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

Victoria Kornfield moved that the minutes from the July 23, 2025, meeting be accepted as written, Denham seconded and all approved.

Public Comments: none

Higher Education Update: Provided by Michael Perry.

The department will be doing an educator preparation program review of UNE, early in October. The review team committee has been approved by the State Board at its last meeting. The precise logistics are being finalized as is the schedule. UNE has a structure where their undergraduate programs and graduate programs have a very unique set of staff, and are soon to be on unique campuses as well. So, there'll be two primary days of in-person visit. One will be at the Biddeford campus visiting with the undergraduate programs, and then the next day, they'll be split, but primarily at the Portland campus, visiting with graduate school, faculty and staff. There's a lot to get done in those two days, but there is an experienced chair in Anita Charles from Bates doing it, who did UNE last time. Fern is serving as the SBE Observer.

The committee reviewed the University of Maine Farmington, University of Maine Presque Isle, University of New England, and USM's annual reports. The UMF reported that they have several early childhood programs with a strong number of people, both in early childhood and the early childhood dual certificate program. They have a 17 to 1 student teacher to supervising clinical IHE staff, which, again, makes one wonder about best practice, and is 17 to 1 doable? That seems like a lot for a supervising faculty to keep track of 17 pre-service students. Denham noted that the Bachelor of Science in Special Education is now fully online and wondered how the students undertook student teaching.

Denham also noted that we don't seem to get data on what the graduates are doing, even though we ask for it. He will figure out a way to make it part of the table. UNE provided that information on theirs. Vicky wondered about requesting more information, digging deeper into each program.

Section 4 of Chapter 114 (4.4, 2.) states that for five year program approvals, "...the unit must submit an annual program update, not to exceed five pages, summarizing yearly data, changes, additions and deletions using a template provided by the Department." The committee has talked with the members of TEAME, and informed them that at some point, we might come back to you and ask for more clarity and deeper information, not necessarily on this annual report. They were amenable to that at the time.

Vicky asked about creating a general spreadsheet that's for the public to be able to compare programs. We recognize that this takes time and staff to form the questions, collect the data, confirm the data, put it together, and then we have to figure out what we are going to do with it.

Dr. Malenfant at UMPI created a very concise report. Again, looking at their ratio of student-teacher supervision, they have a basically 2 to 1 ratio, which, compared to 17 to 1, seems much more powerful in its opportunity for interaction and learning.

The next report was from the University of New England. As Denham points out, they do provide the data on their most recent program completers. Again, according to at least their enrollment data, a lot of elementary teachers are in the line, and a strong number of secondary science teachers as well. It was noticed that of their graduates, about half of them teach in Maine.

Vicky noted that she would love to have a sort of gathering of those who create these programs and a spreadsheet to compare, because there are so many things on UNE's report that are just makes so much sense, and sometimes it's just a matter of, do other schools know about this? Have they thought about doing this? Having that conversation would be a real positive step toward teacher preparation.

Zeke noted that, in addition to TEAME as a structure, where this sort of topic often comes up and is discussed by those in attendance, there's a variety of different convenings and different configurations specific to types of programs. For example, there was recently a humane system convening of all the special education programs in the system to compare and align practices. Sometimes they're specific to particular kinds of institutions, so in this case, just the University of Maine system institutions. But more often, they're driven by a particular topic or area of interest. And include folks from both public and private institutions.

The final report from the University of Southern Maine. Fiona has done an incredible job of providing all kinds of data and information. She has broken it out between baccalaureate initial and post-baccalaureate initial.

Tori moved and Denham seconded that these reports be received and placed on file. This was approved unanimously.

Michael Perry noted that the state legislature is not in session right now, so, nothing in particular there. There have been questions from some charter schools about teacher certification being required starting a year from now, and so we assume those schools are starting to plan ahead to make sure their teachers are certified.

Finally, we have talked on and off about the approval status of UMaine Machias. Right now, the plan is for UMaine Machias to come under UMaine's approval as an educator preparation program in the state. To formally do that, we will need to do a mid-cycle review of the University of Maine to add their UMaine Machias-based programming.

Ezekiel Kimball noted that Machias has developed a really distinctive program with a very clear focus on reaching and supporting rural educators, and it's one that the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias value. And so the idea would be that this is simply an additional path to licensure. But at this point, the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias have a unified accreditation and a unified catalog. 'We'll submit an interim report and request for approval this year, and then during the next CAEP cycle, the University of Maine at Machias's bachelor's degree program would be folded into that CAEP review.'

Certification Update:

Michael reported using his usual top shelf slides that his office handled 2,659 application in July, which is down from June, which is fairly typical. It's an 8% rise in applications process since June 2024. It is almost exactly the application load as July of 2023. In addition, 4,615 emails were sent, 1,341 incoming calls were fielded, and 172 outgoing calls were placed. 3 more retired teachers came back. Denham asked for the information as a spreadsheet so he could consider other ways to display the data.

Vicky asked about these numbers compared to workforce needs. Michael replied that these are the best data we have, but they are an indirect measure of the educator workforce. These are folks who have applied for teaching certification, and had their applications processed. And it is independent of how many of them are serving, or will serve in Maine schools. And so, one reminder there, for example, there are several international schools

which have been really happy with the customer service that they get from the Maine DOE specifically. And so they are preparing educators in their home countries for teaching in American schools and international schools, and the international schools require some American certification of some kind, and so they send all their graduates to Maine to get their applications processed.

Regarding workforce data, it's data that's never been collected, ever, in Maine. We've never done statewide educator workforce data, and the pilot has been working out how to obtain this data from schools in the least soul-crushing way possible, which is a concern, especially for many overworked, districts, and which is probably all of them. And then also to align our data capabilities for how we're reporting this out. So, for example, we want to tie this geographically, that's been something that's been really important, but we've needed staff to learn GIS mapping, and we've needed to produce those maps. And so we're at a place right now where we feel like we have, for example, defined what a vacancy is and know how to ask for it in a good way, hopefully, and then put... and then map it, and so this school year... this school year is working out those, working out those kinks in a final form, and then the whole project would be ready to go statewide the next year.

Denham noted that the longitudinal data study is expanding to a third of the districts. The first year was just a sample, about 15 or 16. The team, rightfully so, spent a long time trying to figure out how you ask for what a vacancy is, because it can be very different at different districts. And the first form took a staff person a day in the superintendent's office to get all the data entered into the form. And that seemed a little excessive workload for the school district.

Regarding update on CHRC's violation reports, the department has a letter from the ECA Legislative Committee, asking them to put together a report out for the committee. But as far as the month-to-month report out, they'll be working instead on making sure they have a full report ready for the ECA committee, and that will be shared that with the State Board in December.

Tom Keller did note on the DOE website that there are 12,435 classroom teachers in Maine for 171,000 students.

TEAMe and EPPS Report: No report from TEAM or the EPPs.

Other Business:

The State Board is planning a retreat on September 11th. We're having our usual meeting on September 10th, an all-day meeting in Augusta. On the 11th, our focus will be on the committees. We'll be looking at the four committees of School Construction, Certification and Higher Ed, Career and Technical Ed, and Student Voices, where we will get a chance, for those of us who don't serve on some of those other committees, to find out what they're doing, what their plans are, how it fits into our strategic plan. Tom said he would love to hear a discussion about what data and what possible directions should the committees go. For example, in certification, he'd love to see a national scan or an international scan on trends and best practices in certification. He really has no idea what happens in Massachusetts or other high achieving states around certification. Teacher demand data is something else we've talked about. Teacher retention data that we can slice and dice, especially by attribute, like rural, would be valuable. Are our teachers starting in rural areas and moving into more urban as they gain more experience, and thus rural schools have a higher number of newer, less experienced teachers? He'd like to think about a lead teacher career ladders kind of stuff. Is there value in a mentor-teacher certification, or an instructional coach certification? Should we be thinking about that, knowing how long it takes our rules to take effect? For higher ed, certainly we need to revise chapter 114, but again, he'd like to look across the nation to see what are the best practices there? We need, as well, to look at chapters 149 and 170. In addition, it may be worthwhile to get at best practices in student teaching, cooperating teacher selection, training, and pay.

We have moved our next meeting to September 17. Originally, it was on the calendar for September 24th but this is a week before, and also a Wednesday.

Adjournment: Having no other business the meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.