



Certification and Higher Education Committee

Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the January 28, 2026 Meeting

Members present: Vicky Cohen, Denham Ward, Tom Keller, also Mary Becker, Interim Staff for the SBE.

Others present: Debra McIntyre, Executive Director MCLA, Lane Clarke- Director of School of Education UNE, Michael Perry, Maine DOE, Patricia Waters, Saint Joseph's College, Gerry Durgin, MIAAA Executive Director, Mallory Cook, Maine Education Association, Training and Early Educator Engagement, and Dan Chuhta, Maine DOE

- I. Tom Keller called the meeting to order at 10:33 am. Committee members and staff introduced themselves to the audience.
- II. It was moved by Vicky Cohen and seconded by Denham Ward that the minutes from the November 19 and December 2, 2025 meetings be approved. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Public Comment: Mallory Cook, Director of Training and Early Educator Engagement at the Maine Education Association, expressed concerns about ensuring the portfolio pathway for teacher certification remains voluntary. Dan Chuhta noted that all certification is voluntary; it is up to the individual to decide which route they wish to take to certification.
- IV. Higher Education Update
 - A. The committee discussed a request from St. Joe's College of Maine for a one-year delay in program approval, which was approved unanimously by the committee. An exhibit is being prepared for the full Board's consideration at its February meeting.
 - B. The committee discussed College of the Atlantic's request for a delay in their Educational Program Review (EPP) site visit, which was granted unanimously. Michael explained that College of the Atlantic is facing staffing changes and is taking on Sterling College students, which requires a potential expansion of their degree authorization. The committee agreed that while College of the Atlantic is preparing a self-study report, an updated version would be preferred before the actual review to allow new faculty input. Michael will communicate this preference and will prepare an exhibit for the Board's February meeting.
 - C. The committee discussed a draft of the annual EPP report. Denham Ward added columns in the data table for number of program completers teaching in Maine, elsewhere, and not teaching. Vicky said she preferred percentages, but Denham would rather have the actual

numbers as data. The draft includes two additional questions; one on student teaching and one on how preservice teachers are taught to teach AI. It is expected that Sam Warren's study of student teaching will include data on institutions providing funding for student teachers and if that funding is for a stipend, housing, transportation or other purposes, so those questions were dropped. After discussions with TEAME members, who are concerned that information such as that on teaching AI could be misinterpreted or taken out of context, the committee agreed to ask institutions for publicly available information, for example from course syllabi on the teaching of AI.

- D. Regarding pertinent legislation, Michael reported on a bill (LD 2015) before the ECA Committee requiring districts to provide data on educator vacancies, which parallels the Regional Longitudinal Data Study's needs. This bill has already had a public hearing, and a work session is scheduled for 1/29.

V. Certification Update

- A. Michael Perry reported that December numbers were slightly down, which is usual for this time of year. 2,020 applications were processed including 1 retired teacher and 228 initial teacher certifications. Processing times are approximately 3 weeks, again the usual. Denham indicated that he would calculate and graph the mean and standard deviation for initial teacher certification data using the updated spreadsheet from Michael Perry and plot the current year against these metrics. Michael is to send updated certification data/charts to Tom and Denham.
- B. There were 877 CHRC violations reported in December. Michael reported that the CHRC violation reports of 877 is the lowest number in recent memory. While we had hoped that the new data management system to update MEIS and interface it with NEO would allow us to know if these are the same 800 each time, the RFP failed to attract a bidder. The project will be re-bid.
- C. Certification violations update will be taken up at the next meeting. The data should be available now but has not yet been analyzed. Michael will prepare and provide a snapshot/report on Certification Violation reports for the next meeting.
- D. Denham noted that the earlier discussion on vacancies usurped his report.

- VI. Dr. Lane Clarke from UNE provided the TEAME and UNE update. Lane provided updates on EPP activities, including the piloting of Science of Reading modules in undergraduate programs by UNE this spring and other institutions this fall. Lane said she would loop Tom (and potentially other committee members) into the agenda and plan for the next TEAM meeting (at Bates, likely in March/April) and ensure an opportunity for discussion about AI is included. EPPs are fully engaged with the Literacy Advisory Group.

A question arose as to open meetings and the number of committee members attending the meeting. If all 3 C&HE committee members attend a TEAME meeting, does that make it a public meeting? Tom sent a request for clarification to Paulette Bonneau.

- VII. In other business, Tom Keller noted that LD 2175 had been posted; this is the bill pertaining to the revisions of Chapter 115. No date had yet been set for an ECA Committee public hearing.

The committee also discussed the need to review and update various regulations, with Tom emphasizing that Chapter 114, which sets standards for teacher preparation, needs to be revised soon. At the next meeting, the committee should begin discussion on prioritization and planning for the review/revision of Chapter 114 and other relevant rules.

VIII. The date of the next meeting – February 25, was noted.

IX. Tom Keller adjourned the meeting at 11:55 am.