



## **Certification and Higher Education Committee**

Maine State Board of Education

Minutes of the October 22, 2025 Meeting

Members and staff present: Tom Keller, Chair, Tori Kornfield, Vicky Cohen, Denham Ward and Erica Tompkins.

Others present: Michael Perry, Maine DOE, Erin Straine, University of Maine, Orono, Shelly Tennett, Chair of Teacher Prep, Husson University, Gerry Durgin, Maine Athletic Directors, Fiona McDonnell, Dir. Educ Prep USM and John Kraljic, retired engineering technology teacher, representing the Technology and Engineering Association of Maine and the Maine Engineering Education Committee.

I. Tom Keller called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Committee members and staff introduced themselves to the audience.

II. The minutes of the September 17, 2025 meeting were moved for acceptance by Tori, seconded by Denham, and unanimously approved.

III. John Kraljic provided his remarks during the public comment period. John expressed concerns about Chapter 115 and the 701 endorsement, arguing that the legislation allowing pre-K-12 teaching without a 4-year degree was passed in error. Michael explained that relevant coursework from any accredited institution, including community colleges, is accepted for certification. John raised a specific case of a retiring engineering technology teacher in Boothbay, which may lead to a non-baccalaureate-holding teacher in a pre-K-12 environment.

IV. Michael Perry gave an update on higher education issues. Michael provided updates on several higher education program reviews, including those for the University of Maine at Augusta and Northeastern's out-of-state program, with reports expected in November. He also discussed a new application from the Classical Planning Institute seeking temporary state authorization to offer online PhDs in neoclassical architecture, pending both state board approval and NECHI accreditation. The institute aims to follow a model similar to the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, with a residency component in Italy, and is seeking legislative sponsorship for full degree-granting authority.

The group discussed upcoming events and reviews, including MECA+D in three weeks and a mid-cycle review for UMaine Machias, which will integrate their programs under UMaine's approval. They also addressed the status of Beal's review, noting that additional evidence requested by the review team had been received, and plans for a physical campus visit and virtual review are underway. Tori raised a question about the hands-on components of nursing programs, which

Michael and Denham clarified are addressed through field experiences and standardized testing for licensure.

Michael Perry will provide the committee with the Northeastern's out-of-state program approval application report once all review team members submit their portions. Michael Perry will prepare the Classic Planning Institute/Academy temporary approval recommendation for the State Board.

Regarding revisions to the EPP Annual Report questions and format, Denham noted that he would prepare a draft for our December meeting. Denham will present plans to modify the annual EPP report format to include questions about AI incorporation and longitudinal data tracking of graduates' career paths.

Tori and Vicky reported that they attended one meeting of the Student Teacher Incentive Study Group and that would likely be the extent of the meetings. Sam Warren of the UMS is preparing a report. The committee discussed funding challenges for student teaching programs, with Tori and Vicky noting that private universities like Bowdoin offer stipends while public institutions face financial constraints.

The committee discussed ongoing work related to standards 114 and 115, with Tom noting that feedback from recent UMA and UNE visits would be valuable for improving the process.

V. Michael Perry gave an update on certification issues including his usual stellar data visualizations. Michael reported that September 2023 saw 3,198 certifications processed, marking the busiest September in recent years, with communication outputs up significantly. The certification team continues to manage complex cases involving certification violations and CHRC requirements, with Michael noting they are working to improve data tracking while maintaining confidentiality. The committee should receive a report on CHRC and certification violations next month. Michael Perry to share the DOE's response letter to the ECA committee regarding certification and criminal history background check violations with the committee.

VI. Shelly Tennet of Husson University provided a TEAME and Husson report. The Teacher Educator Alliance of Maine met on September 19th and plans to meet again in November and the spring. They discussed student teaching compensation for LD1327, with concerns about funding and equity across institutions. The group also talked about various models for student teaching, including residency models and cooperative partnerships. Shelly shared updates on Husson's enrollment and a new pilot program partnering with a local middle school for incoming freshmen. The discussion touched on the importance of supporting new teachers and the implementation of literacy and numeracy plans across campuses.

Vicky shared updates on the numeracy and literacy plans, noting that while the reading plan was well-developed, the numeracy plan was only two pages long. Both state activities involving preservice education. Vicky is to meet with Beth Lambert and Peter Lancia at the MSMA conference regarding the Math Advisory Council.

VII. Regarding Other Business, the committee discussed the public comment period for Chapter 115, which ends on Friday, with approximately 30 people having attended the public hearing. Tom mentioned that Laura Cyr and he would create a response document based on written comments,

which would then go to the Attorney General's office for review. The committee considered the possibility of voting on the proposal before the State Board meeting in December, with the ultimate goal of presenting it to the legislature on January 9th.

The committee discussed scheduling a special meeting to review and vote on chapter 115 before the December 11th state board meeting. Due to Denham's absence from November 9th to 25th, they agreed to hold the special meeting on **December 2nd at 11am to vote on the changes**, with Tom and Laura preparing the materials beforehand. The committee also confirmed that the recommendation would be presented to the full state board with the committee's prior approval, which Denham noted would help facilitate the state board's agreement.

VIII. The committee confirmed their next meetings would be held on November 19th and December 17th, with a note about moving to the third Wednesday to avoid holiday conflicts. The conversation ended with an informal discussion about Shelly's husband's athletic achievements at Bangor High.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.