



Certification and Higher Education Committee

MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of the May 27, 2026 Meeting

Minutes of May 27, 2026, Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting.

Members present: Victoria Cohen, Denham Ward, Tom Keller, and Craig Flowers, Staff for the State Board of Education.

Others present: Erin Straine, UM, Jon Moody, Superintendent and MSMA liaison to the SBE, Dan Chuhta, MDOE Deputy Commissioner, Michael Perry, MDOE, Gary Stevens, MIAAA, Flynn Ross, USM, Katie Rybakova, Thomas College, Wendy Kostenbauder, MDOL, Heather Perry, Superintendent, Jon Doty, Assistant Superintendent and President, MCLA, James Ford, SBE

I. The meeting was called to order at 10:33 am by Chair Keller. Committee members, staff and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

II. It was moved by Denham to accept the minutes, seconded by Vicky and voted unanimous to accept.

III. No public comments were offered.

IV. Higher Education update

A. Michael reminded the committee that we will be voting on reports from two higher ed institutions. One is the exhibit from the department recommending accepting the review committee's recommendations and voting for approval of Beal University. For Northeastern University, there'll be again an exhibit from the department that is a long exhibit because there are 70 some odd programs under review and they are all listed in the exhibit to make sure we are explicit in what the State Board would be voting on. The second document is a response to the site visit report that Northeastern University has submitted.

B. Annual EPP reports from Bates, Bowdoin, Colby and College of the Atlantic were reviewed and a motion was made by Denham to receive and place these reports in the file, seconded by Vicky and it was voted unanimously to accept. Denham noted the Bates program for a ninth semester for the students to

do their student teaching and wondered what the tuition or stipend implications of that ninth semester would be.

C. Michael reminded us that there will be two full reviews in the Fall of 2026, mid-October in Presque Isle and November at Eastern Maine Community College. Teachers and administrators as well as representatives of higher education institutions are welcome to join these teams.

V. Certification update.

A. MEIS summary - There were 434 initial teacher certificate applications processed which is a high number. Overall 2425 applications were processed. Slides that Michael produces monthly are attached to these minutes.

B. CHRC violations report. This month there were 962 CHRC violations, which always upticks at the end of the school year. But mostly this high number is because of the continued backlog in CHRC approvals that we have. We're still operating in a condition where we're using Identico's new proprietary software on the back end. Cleared clean CHRC reports that previously were a single click but now our certification team has 12 clicks to get to the same product and have to manually process every clean CHRC in a way they never did previously.

Currently there is no way to look at these violations longitudinally but Michael and his staff have created a workaround. They will be taking a monthly snapshot and will review the ids after a few months to determine if these are new folks or the same ones month after month.

C. Certifications violations report. This still requires a connection between NEO and MEIS data systems. The certification violations number is one that is exceedingly fuzzy and includes a lot of CTE educators whose positions are not mapped appropriately between NEO and MEIS. They have some 744 reports now.

Vicky asked about certification for business managers and adding that to Chapter 115. There is no way to add anything to Chapter 115 at this point. And the hiring of business managers is best left to superintendents.

VI. TEAMe and EPP report

Dr. Flynn reported that UMPI is well into its self-study for the fall site visit. Flynn asked Katie Rybakova to report on the trauma, healing and community wellness master's degree program they are starting in the fall.

Flynn said TEAMe has a study group of 5 people reviewing Chapter 114 and looking at some research on best practices. She noted that the chapter starts with the Board vision from 2012 and wonder if the Board would be revising its vision

statement. She also noted Section 3.2 c) that states "All units preparing professional educators for certification, including alternate routes to certification, shall have approved programs" and wondered how the local portfolio fit into the need for an "approved program". The definition of "approved program" in that chapter is "A professional education program developed and offered by a unit that includes a Maine college or university..."

This runs straight into pathway 2 as well as the local portfolio pathway. The consensus was that these are *pathways* and not *programs*, since the definition of a program refers to connection to a higher ed institution.

VII. Other business

A. Discussion ensued on a draft packet of materials regarding the local portfolio option. Tom noted that there are three major pieces of work; one is figuring out the process and role of the SBE in its approval process, how does that work?; next is the huge piece of the program that is going to take the career changer or teacher seeking an additional endorsement and provide sufficient trainings and support for them to become successful teachers, the so-called template; and finally there is the process and role of the MDOE.

Vicky noted that on page 6, second sentence under State Board of Education, the use of "to monitor statewide plan implementation" and wondered how the SBE could do that. Tom replied that implementation meant reviewing data such as numbers of participants at each SAU that began a portfolio process, numbers that complete the process, etc. She also wondered about the phrase "follows the approved portfolio plan with fidelity" and how the SBE would accomplish that.

Tom pointed out that implementation of the plan does not say implementation of each portfolio.

Vicky then questioned who has the authority to pause or revoke a plan if the plan was not being followed. As per this new section of 115, it is the SBE's responsibility. Heather Perry pointed out that typically whomever approves a plan is the same one that has a responsibility to unapprove it.

A need was expressed for long term data on which route a teacher took, how long they stayed in teacher, etc.

B. Chapter 114 - Tom encouraged the members of TEAMe to gather information on EPP standards across the nation and internationally. Michael's colleagues across the nation, NASBE and the TEAMe members can all be sources.

A question was raised about statutory authority, and the AG's office has said it is defensible but weak.

VIII. A reminder that the next meeting is June 24 at 10:30 am, the regular time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 am.