



Certification and Higher Education Committee
MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the August 26, 2026 Meeting

Minutes of August 26, 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. Mike Thurston was absent and excused

Others present: Michael Perry, MDOE, Jon Doty, Assistant Superintendent and President, MCLA, Heather Perry, Gorham, Wendi Malenfant, UMPI, Debra McIntyre, MCLA, Alison Miller, Bowdoin, Chuck Dorn, Bowdoin, Fiona McDonnell, USM, Erin Straine, UM

- I. The meeting was called to order at 10:31 am by Chair Keller. Committee members and staff introduced themselves.
- II. Vicky moved to accept the minutes of the July 22, 2026 meeting and Denham seconded. This motion passed unanimously.
- III. No public comments were provided during the public comment period
- IV. A higher education update was discussed.

The Annual EPP Reports for the final 3 Maine EPPS were reviewed. These were reports for the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the University of New England, and the University of Southern Maine. Wendy from UMPI explained their efforts to streamline early childhood and art education programs, noting they now offer focused pathways for these areas. Fiona from USM presented updated data showing increased enrollment and the addition of undergraduate programs, while highlighting challenges with tracking graduates' career paths. The group discussed improvements to data collection systems, with Michael explaining current limitations in tracking educators' career trajectories and future plans for better longitudinal data tracking.

Denham moved and Vicky seconded that the reports be accepted and placed in the file. The motion was passed unanimously.

Denham's work in summarizing the reports and providing thoughts on questions for next year's report was noted and appreciated. A suggestion was made to Denham that MEPRI consider leading an educator certification data summit soon. Another suggestion was made to ask the EPPs what questions they would like asked on the Annual EPP Report.

The conversation ended with a discussion about a new legislation (LD2098) that requires clarification from Michael regarding its implications for higher education statutes. Michael provided a comprehensive overview of Maine's degree-granting authorization process, explaining the regulatory triad consisting of accreditation, federal oversight, and state authorization. He detailed the three authorization tracks in Rule Chapter 149: program approval for temporary programs, initial degree authorization for new institutions, and additional authorization for existing institutions wanting to offer higher degree levels. Michael clarified that all review standards across these tracks are identical, and he highlighted the unique aspects of Maine's process, including the legislative involvement in initial authorizations and the temporary authorization option for new institutions.

Higher Education Authorization Streamlining

Michael explained that LD2098 provides the state board with a new option to streamline higher education authorization pathways by allowing institutions previously approved to offer programs within the last five years to skip duplicative reviews when seeking full degree authorization. He clarified that while this creates an option to avoid redundant reviews, the state board retains discretion to require full reviews if concerns arise about an institution. The discussion included questions about the impetus for the legislation and safeguards, with Michael noting that the temporary degree approval provision prevents institutions from using temporary authorization as a basis for the new streamlined process.

Michael did note that in an upcoming meeting, he would like to inform the committee about LD 2192 - covered investigations legislation.

V. Michael Perry provided an update on certification. He presented certification data showing 2,685 applications processed (including 515 initial teacher certificates) in July, up 10% from the previous month, with CHRC applications returning to normal levels after backend software issues were resolved. The team discussed projections for initial teaching certifications through 2026, showing an expected upward trend following the post-pandemic normalization period.

Tom asked that the CHRC violations report and Certification violations report be put off until the next meeting due to time constraints.

VI. Dr. Alison Miller and Dr. Chuck Dorn from Bowdoin College presented the TEAMe and Bowdoin EPP report. Alison noted that due to summer, TEAMe did not have much to report. She did note continuing interest in the revisions to Chapter 115 and evaluation of alternative pathways. They reported on program expansion at Bowdoin, including increased science and math teacher preparation, the addition of two new tenure lines, and pilot programs in music and visual arts.

VII. In Other Business, Tom reviewed progress on Chapter 115 revisions, with announced that a statement of factual and policy bias would be presented for review at the September 10th SBE meeting. Also at this meeting, he hopes to release a procedure document regarding pathway 3 including a new requirement for annual reviews through 2036.

VIII. There being no other business, the committee was reminded of the September 23 meeting and this meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.