



**Certification and Higher Education Committee**  
Maine State Board of Education  
Minutes of the September 17, 2025 Meeting

**SBE members present:** Tori Kornfield, Vicky Cohen, Denham Ward, Tom Keller with Erica Tompkins providing technical assistance.

**Others present:** Michael Perry, Maine DOE, Debra McIntyre, Ex. Director MCLA, Laura Cyr, Maine DOE, Ezekiel Kimball, University of Maine, Orono, Mallory Cook, Maine Education Association, Gerry Durgin, MIAAA, Holly Blair, Executive Director - Professional Division, Maine Principals' Association, Dr. Flynn Ross, Prof and Chair Teacher Education Univ of Southern Maine, Rose Angell, Erin Straine, University of Maine, Jon Doty, RSU 34 Asst. Superintendent, MCLA (board president) and MSSA, Wendi Malenfant, UMPI Education Program Director and Jane Loxterkamp EMCC Department Chair of education.

**I. Tom Keller called the committee to order at 10:30 am and had each member introduce themselves.**

**II.** Regarding the minutes of the August meeting, Tori asked that they be amended to indicate that the SBE retreat was now not taking place on October 3. With that correction, Tori voted to approve them, Vicky seconded it and all votes unanimously in favor.

**III. There were no public comments offered.**

**IV. Maine Higher Education Review Updates**

We discussed the upcoming institutional reviews of UNE and UMA. Michael Perry, Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, provided updates on the logistics for both reviews, noting that UNE's would be primarily in-person across their Biddeford and Portland campuses, while UMA's would be largely virtual with one day of in-person components. Denham inquired about the status of the review of Beal University, to which Michael responded that he had received additional evidence requested by the review team and was scheduled to meet with UMFK's president (the review team's chair) to discuss next steps. The team that reviewed the Roux Institute of Northeastern University has submitted its report for the leaders of the Roux Institute to review.

The members discussed the release of literacy and numeracy action plans by the department, which may impact higher education, particularly regarding mathematics preparation for future teachers. The group also touched on the numeracy action plan's potential impact on other areas in higher

education, though it was noted as being too early to determine specific effects.

Michael shared updates on federal regulations, including concerns about graduate outcome data reporting and Title IV eligibility, noting that many institutions may struggle to meet the 40% threshold for loan repayment.

#### **V. Certification Data and Workload Update**

Michael presented the August certification data, noting a 26% increase from July with 3,354 total applications processed, primarily due to CHRC applications for school support staff positions. He highlighted the significant workload of the certification team, led by Erin Reinhardt, which includes processing background checks, handling appeals, and working with international students. Michael also discussed the increase in communication volume during August, with 5,000 emails and 1,464 incoming calls to the certification hotline. The team is exploring ways to support members with MEIS account troubleshooting, and Michael agreed to follow up with Mallory on potential best practices.

Denham reported on the longitudinal data study and plans to create new data visualizations.

Data from the certification violations report should be available in December.

**VI. Report from TEAME and EPPs - no report since we had changed the committee meeting date and TEAME had already scheduled their meeting for after this date.**

#### **VII. Other business**

##### **State Board of Education Retreat Updates**

Tom discussed the upcoming State Board of Education retreat, which was postponed due to scheduling conflicts. He mentioned that the retreat will focus on reviewing the operations of major committees and discussing strategic planning for certification and higher education.

##### **Teacher Recertification System Review**

The group discussed teacher recertification processes, drawing parallels to the medical field's evolution from lifetime certificates to ongoing recertification through a combination of examinations and workplace-based assessments. Denham shared that while he hasn't researched other states' systems yet, he plans to explore portfolio-based approaches used in Vermont and New Hampshire (Flynn noted Portfolio system in Vermont

Teacher Candidate Assessment of Performance (TCAP) in New Hampshire), which could provide valuable insights for Maine's teacher certification process. The discussion concluded with Tom noting that while locally controlled LCC systems offer flexibility, there's a need to review Chapter 114 and conduct a national scan of higher education certification practices to ensure Maine's system remains effective and competitive.

##### **Statutory Authority for Rulemaking**

The group discussed the need to address statutory authority issues for rulemaking, particularly regarding Chapter 114, which lacks clear legislative backing for its current responsibilities. Daniel explained that the State Board needs specific language in statute to enable rulemaking for educator

preparation program approvals, as the current statutory citations are either repealed or irrelevant. An example is to add the phrase "to review EPPS" to the duties of the SBE.

The committee agreed with the idea that Laura Cyr could conduct a review of State Board rules and prepare slides to present the findings, while Denham raised questions about prioritizing rule updates, noting that Chapter 114 is significantly longer than other chapters.

#### **Chapter 115 Rule Change Public Comment Period**

The State Board of Education discussed the upcoming public comment period for Chapter 115 rule changes, which will run from September 24 to October 24, with a public hearing scheduled for October 15th from 3-5 PM at the Cross Office Building. Laura confirmed that both clean and marked-up versions of the proposed rules would be available for review on the Department of Education's website, and the board will create a response document after the comment period concludes. The board noted that the legislative acceptance date is the second Friday in January, after which ECA committee hearings are expected to begin in February.

**VIII.** The next meeting on October 22, 2025 was announced and this meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.