



## **MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

23 State House Station  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

### STATE OF MAINE

The State Board of Education held a regular monthly meeting on December 11, 2024, at Westbrook Middle School in Westbrook, Maine and virtually via Zoom. The following members were present: Chair Fern Desjardins; Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau; Wendy Ault; James Ford; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Ed Morin; Phat Thai; Denham Ward; and Cedar Worster

Others Present: Emily Cummins, Office Specialist II, State Board of Education

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Chair Desjardins took roll call and declared a quorum present.

### **VISION STATEMENT:**

Read by student member, Cedar Worster: The vision of the Maine State Board of Education is that all students will receive a high-quality education leading to graduation with the skills, knowledge, and principles to be prepared for future learning, careers, and life.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:** No adjustments to the agenda.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by James Ford, and voted seven in favor with one abstention (Denham Ward) to approve the November 13, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No Public Comment.

## **OFFICER'S REPORTS:**

### **Chair, Fern Desjardins**

#### **➤ FORMATION OF STUDENT TRANSFERS AD HOC COMMITTEE**

Fern announced the formation of a Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee to revise and improve the process for resolving student transfer requests. She appointed Paulette Bonneau, Tom Keller and Ed Morin to serve with her on the committee. The ad hoc committee is holding its first meeting with four superintendents, the executive director of MSSA, and Deputy Commissioner Chuhta on December 19.

- Board packets included a copy of the *Certificate of Organization of Regional School Unit No. 48* that Fern DocuSigned on October 16 and signed in person on November 14 in Augusta. Bremen, Damariscotta, and Newcastle have withdrawn from AOS 93. The effective date is July 1, 2025. That leaves the towns of Bristol, Jefferson, Nobleboro and South Bristol in AOS 93.
- Board packets also included some correspondence from Michael Perry, Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, to the University of Maine indicating that their request for off-cycle approval of their educator preparation programs in special education, educational leadership, literacy education, and kinesiology and physical education has been granted. These approvals remain effective until the expiration/renewal of the programs currently under seven-year State Board approval.
- November 14 – Attended the Chapter 115 conceptual conversation focusing on special education at the Cross Building in Augusta. Only one educator attended (virtually). She brought up several concerns for consideration. Fern thanked Paulette and Tom for attending.
- November 15 – Attended the first meeting of the Governor's Commission on School Construction. There are 10 members on the Commission serving with Chair Valerie Landry. Presenters included MDOE Commissioner Pender Makin who explained the purpose and expectations of the Commission; Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs who gave an overview of the current state of school building infrastructure; and Paula Gravelle, Director of School Finance, who spoke of financing mechanisms and funding. The next meeting is scheduled for December 20 at the Cross Building and virtually.
- December 4 – Fern and Denham attended a preliminary meeting with Beal University to review past degree authorizations and their request for master's degree authorization. Michael Perry, Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, provided documents of evidence on Beal's degree-granting authority of associate degrees and baccalaureate degrees. The next steps are for Beal to update their self-study and for the MDOE to form a Review Committee to review and evaluate submitted materials.

- December 9 – Paulette and Fern attended the *Key State Leaders to Advance Strategies for Eliminating Educator Shortages* meeting with 14 other participants representing MDOE, University of Maine, Maine Community College System, Maine Education Association, Educate Maine, Department of Labor, and superintendents. Members discussed how their work intersects with the TeachMaine framework, collaborating in refining the framework, and formulating a plan for moving forward.

#### **Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau**

- Paulette attended two additional Ch. 115 conceptual conversation meetings on 11/12/2024 and 11/14/2024.
- She attended the CTE Committee meeting.
- Paulette made arrangements for the State Board meeting and worked with Fern to schedule a solution-based meeting on December 19 with several Superintendents to deal with the student transfer appeal process.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### ***School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):***

The School Construction Committee did not meet in November.

##### ***Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):***

The Certification and Higher Education Committee met on November 20, 2024.

- There were 24 total participants.
  - A. Beal University would welcome a review visit team. Michael Perry, MDOE, has confirmed that they have authorization at the bachelor's level. Beal has applied for master's level degrees and was given temporary approval by the MDOE.
  - B. UMPI has asked for an off-cycle review, but team members were not available. Fern is likely to serve as the SBE Observer with Tori as backup observer.
  - C. The Roux Institute of Northeastern University has applied to the MDOE for program review of new programs they hope to offer. Michael is assembling a team to review these and hopes to move forward with the review in December.
  - D. Michael noted that a new institution offering a degree in architecture was in the beginning stages of applying under chapter 149 at the October meeting, but no mention was made of this at the November meeting.

- E. Michael supplied the committee with the usual slides on applications processed last month as well as cumulative data. In September, 2,942 applications were processed. In October, 2,801 applications were processed including 282 initial teacher certificates.

We continue to have a small number of retired teachers take advantage of legislation to regain their certification. Processing time has increased a little and now averages 3 to 3.5 weeks. This is a big improvement over the recent past when it was over 4 weeks.

- F. There were 1,344 CHRC violation reports generated and sent to superintendents.

Regarding Certification violation reports, schools have an October deadline, and Michael assumes he will have a snapshot of the data in December.

- G. EPP and TEAMe Update – Dr. Rachel Somerville, MECA&D

She noted that MECA&D had a MAT program and was moving to offering courses and programs on-line.

- H. LD 2221/Resolve to amend Chapter 115 – Tom Keller

Several people made comments and provided feedback on Chapter 115 including Jon Moody, Heather Perry, Jon Doty, Connor Archer, Matt Nelson, Gay Anne MacDonald, Scott Harris and Rebecca Edelman. All at the meeting were asked to submit their comments in writing to Laura and Tom.

While some discussion ensued, it was generally using the given comments to provide clarity on the issues being identified. Important concepts noted included:

- Use of portfolios or rubrics such as the HOUSSE (high objective uniform State standard of evaluation) for initial certification, and who evaluates them
- Special education certifications
- School counselor certifications

### ***Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):***

The CTE Committee met on November 19, 2024.

- The CTE Committee met virtually via Zoom on Tuesday November 19<sup>th</sup>. DOE CTE Director Dwight Littlefield reported that they put out another \$2.7 Million Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan funding for all CTE schools specifically for equipment by state formula for a quick turnaround. This funding had to be obligated by December.
- They are working on contracts on the \$20,000,000 equipment and infrastructure bond approved by the legislature.
- Dwight and Educate Maine head Jason Judd met again with the Southern Region Advisory Group, which includes business leaders and CTE Directors in

Southern Maine. They are exploring whether this should be done in other parts of the state.

- The State CTE team was getting ready for school reviews.
- The Community Colleges reported that they are switching to a new student information and financial system to better track students and coordinate with advising and other issues.
- MACTE Executive Director Dave Keaton said that the organization is looking at several initiatives that they are going to continue to pursue.
- One is the bill which would allow smaller schools to get full time instructor equivalents which should make it easier for these schools with fewer students in their catchment areas to attract teachers. They must have a bill proposed by the first part of January.
- MACTE will also be on the lookout for any CTE related legislation up before the 132<sup>nd</sup> to prepare testimony, something the CTE Committee will also be doing.
- MACTE is also supporting the Social Security Farness Act which passed the U.S. House with overwhelming bipartisan approval and now awaits action by the Senate with the clock for this session winding down. As Dave Keaton points out, the passage of this bill would provide a boost to try and recruit industry people to become CTE instructors.
- Amanda Peterson, who's MACTE president and Director of the United Technologies CTE in Bangor, reports that MACTE met at Bath Iron Works for a round table discussion with BIW leadership, University representatives, the Maine Defense Alliance, and the Community Colleges as they considered how CTE supports industry and workforce needs, and how they can be better partners to Maine CTE Schools.
- Amanda said curriculum alignments are progressing in many CTE Centers and Regions.
- Mid-Coast School of Technology Director Bobby Deetjen said the school hosted the Pen Bay Chamber and they were joined by Maine State Chamber Head Patrick Woodcock and State Economist Amanda Rector who presented data about coming workforce challenges and the need for more collaboration between business and education.
- Educate Maine Executive Director Jason Judd said they've been working with the Maine Congressional Delegation on the Social Security Fairness Bill.
- Education Maine's Kate Howell reports they have received funding through Maine DOL to support expansion of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship for women in construction over the next two years. They also participated in the inaugural apprenticeship summit with Maine DOL.

***Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):***

The Legislative Action committee did not meet.

***Student Voices (James Ford, Cedar Worster and Phat Thai):***

- Applications for Student Cabinet are due next Friday December 20, 2024.
- Cedar reported that they expect to have several members back from last year and is not sure how many new applications have been received.
- The Student Cabinet meeting dates for 2025 will be on January 16, February 13, March 6, and April 17.
- Phat said that they have exchanged emails with Tom discussing how local/student school boards correlate with Maine State Boards.
- Cedar has been attending monthly NASBE student roundtable discussions and has spoken with several students on boards of education about the voting process.

***Charter Commission Representatives (Victoria Kornfield, Thomas Keller, and James Ford):***

- There are 2717 students in the nine Charter Schools.
- The applications for the tenth school will close in January, and a school will be chosen by May, if they choose one.
- The word “innovative” is in the mission statement and goals. They would like to encourage more innovation in the Charter Schools, and how to do this.

***Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):***

The Professional Standards Board did not meet.

***NASBE:***

***Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):***

- December 2 - Keven Ellis, Board Chair, facilitated NASBE's Member Office Hours. Chair Ellis asked members to speak on the 2024 Board accomplishment they were most proud of, challenges for 2025, and to share ideas for increasing member engagement with NASBE.  
Points of interest – Connecticut has reciprocity with 23 states. Connecticut and Texas have a different board/committee to work on educator certification, but they go the State Board for final approval.
- November 26 Webinar – *Politics, Policy, and Pies: Examining the 2024 Elections*. NASBE staff members Abigail Potts and Joey Hedger were joined by Reg Leichty, Foresight Law + Policy; José Muñoz, Education Commission of the States; and Austin Reid, National Conference of State Legislatures, to review results and key takeaways from the November elections, explore what they mean for education policymaking in 2025, and forecast what's likely to top state board agendas.

Takeaways: Considerations of the federal stimulus winddown; funding may be challenging in 2025 ... will have to work hard to justify levels of spending; and eliminating the US DOE is “impossibly difficult” ... even internal reorganization would be difficult.

- December 3 – Fern joined the webinar on *Building and Retaining the Teacher Workforce*. The panel discussed policy approaches that influence teacher supply, demand, and retention. They shared ways to better support teachers and students (e.g., mentoring and induction, salary increases, leadership support [key in retaining teachers], high professional standards with supports in place, and equitable distribution of well-qualified teachers).
- NASBE leadership is considering ways to increase member engagement and thinking about having a deliberate presence at the National Forum of the Education Commission of the States at their July 2025 conference.
- Fern reminded Board members to check their NASBE monthly newsletters to stay informed of the many meetings and events each month for board members to engage with national experts and to network with peers from other states. NASBE Communication emailed the December newsletter to members on December 6. The theme was “Reflecting on 2024, Looking Ahead to 2025.”

**Government Affairs Committee (Thomas Keller):**

National Association of State Boards of Education’s Government Affairs Committee met on December 3, 2024.

The meeting was attended by people from five states (IN, UT, AR, TN, and ME) and three NASBE staff members.

1. Abby Potts of NASBE gave an update on happenings around DC, mostly within and potentially within the US Department of Education. One action is a Senate bill ([https://www.rounds.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/returning\\_education\\_to\\_our\\_states\\_act.pdf](https://www.rounds.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/returning_education_to_our_states_act.pdf)) possibly titled the “Returning Education to Our States Act” It proposes abolishing the Department of Education and states-

- (1) all functions, programs, and authorities of the Secretary of Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1460 et seq.) shall be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (2) each authority and program of the Office of Indian Education of the Department of Education shall be transferred to the Department of the Interior;
- (3) each Impact Aid program under title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.) shall be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (4) the Federal Pell Grant program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a) shall be transferred to the Department of the Treasury;

- (5) the Federal Family Education Loan Program under part B of such title IV shall be transferred to the Department of the Treasury;
- (6) the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program under part D of such title IV shall be transferred to the Department of the Treasury;
- (7) the Federal Perkins Loans Program under part E of such title IV shall be transferred to the Department of the Treasury;
- (8) the activities described in part F, G, or H of title IV that are carried out by the Department of Education shall be transferred so as to be carried out by the Department of Treasury;
- (9) the Health Education Assistance Loan program under title VII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 292 et seq.) shall be transferred to the Department of Treasury; and
- (10) the programs under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq.) and the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) shall be transferred to the Department of the Treasury.

#### SEC. 4. BLOCK GRANTS TO STATES.

##### (a) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION STATE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

- (1) IN GENERAL - The Secretary of the Treasury shall carry out a program under which the Secretary makes allocations to States to support elementary and secondary education, including career and technical education.
- (2) ALLOCATIONS TO STATES - The allocations made by the Secretary of Treasury to each State<sup>15</sup> under this subsection for a fiscal year shall be in an amount that bears the same relationship to the amount appropriated to carry out this subsection for the fiscal year as the number of students in kindergarten through grade 12 who were enrolled in public, private, and home schools in the State for the previous fiscal year bears to the number of such students in all States for the previous fiscal year.
- (3) USE OF FUNDS - A State that receives an allocation under this subsection shall use such funding for any purpose relating to early childhood, elementary, or secondary education.

##### (b) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STATE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

- (1) IN GENERAL - The Secretary of the Treasury shall carry out a program under which the Secretary makes allocations to States to support post-secondary education.
- (2) ALLOCATIONS TO STATES - The allocations made by the Secretary of Treasury to each State under this subsection for a fiscal year shall be in an amount that bears the same relationship to the amount appropriated to carry out this subsection for the fiscal year as the number of students who were enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions in the State for the previous fiscal year bears to the number of such students in all States for the previous fiscal year.



The implications are that states will be receiving checks without guidance and little oversight and there will be little advocacy for education or increased budgets on the federal level.

2. The U.S. Department of Education has shared two new resources.  
[The ESEA Title II, Part A Strategic Use of Funds](#) non-regulatory guidance highlights how these funds can help implement strategic policies to address educator shortages and provide educators and students with what they need to thrive. This includes using these funds to support strategies related to improving compensation and working conditions, expanding pathways into the profession, providing induction and professional learning, offering educator leadership and career advancement opportunities, and promoting educator diversity.  
[The Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce to Strengthen Teaching and Learning](#) non-regulatory guidance highlights the benefits of a diverse educator workforce for all students, and particularly students of color; describes strategies for States and LEAs can take support to support their educator workforce; and highlights Federal funds available to support these efforts.
3. Even though few states were represented, we had an interesting discussion on two policies working their way through other states. One was a 'no fee' policy that prevents schools from charging families for things like art and band expenses and the second is the 'no cell phone' policies.

***Public Education Positions Committee (Paulette Bonneau):***

The Public Education Positions Committee did not meet.

**UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS:** No Unfinished Business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Consideration of Approval of Thomas College Educator Preparation Programs in Accordance with Rule Chapter 114**

BACKGROUND: Educator preparation programs (EPPs) offered by institutions of higher education in Maine are approved by the State Board of Education following the guidelines laid out by Rule Chapter 114, *Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel*. Approved EPPs are able to recommend graduates for eligibility to earn certification under "Pathway 1" in Rule Chapter 115 for the specific certification areas included in their review. Thomas College in Waterville, Maine, last received a five-year approval of its educator preparation programs in 2019. The program applied for reapproval of existing

programs and approval of new programs in 2023 and submitted a self-assessment report indicating their adherence to the EPP standards in Rule Chapter 114. A review team chaired by Dr. Lane Clarke of the University of New England was approved by the State Board of Education, with Vice Chair Paulette Bonneau assigned as the State Board observer. Dr. Laura Cyr and Michael Perry also served as non-voting observers on behalf of the Department of Education.

The formal review of Thomas College's educator preparation programs took place between September 23-26, 2024, with an in-person visit on September 23 and virtual interviews in the days following. The review team finalized consensus findings and recommendations for the State Board of Education, and a draft of their report was reviewed by Thomas College representatives to verify factual accuracy and to provide any feedback or response to the review team's findings. The State Board of Education formally received the report during its regular meeting on November 13, 2024, along with the program's self-report materials, in accordance with Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11.

The state review team has recommended the State Board of Education approve Thomas College's educator preparation programs for a period of five years in the following certification areas:

- 081: Early Childhood Education (B-K)
- 029: Early Elementary (PK-3)
- 020: General Elementary (K-6)
- 100: Middle Level - English Language Arts (5-8)
- 200: Middle Level - Social Studies (5-8)
- 300: Middle Level - Mathematics (5-8)
- 340: Middle Level - Science (5-8)
- 100: Secondary Education - English/Language Arts (6-12)
- 200: Secondary Education - Social Studies (6-12)
- 300: Secondary Education - Mathematics (6-12)
- 395: Secondary Education: Life Science (6-12)

Now, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11, paragraph d, it is before the State Board of Education whether to accept the review team's recommendations and approve the above educator preparation programs at Thomas College.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11, paragraph d, the State Board of Education accept the Thomas College EPP review team's recommendations and grant a full five-year approval to Thomas College's undergraduate educator preparation programs for the period of Fall 2024 through Fall 2029.

MOTION by Tom Keller, seconded by Paulette Bonneau, and unanimously voted by those present that, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11, paragraph d, the State Board of Education accept the Thomas College EPP review team's recommendations and grant a full five-year approval to Thomas College's undergraduate educator preparation programs for the period of Fall 2024 through Fall 2029.

### **2025 State Board of Education Meetings Calendar**

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Denham Ward, and unanimously voted by those present to approve the 2025 State Board of Education meetings calendar, as amended. The motion was adopted.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Please submit expense account vouchers to Emily Cummins by the 15<sup>th</sup> day following the month of the expenses incurred.
- The next regular State Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Burton M. Cross Building in Augusta, and virtually via Zoom.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Emily Cummins, Office Specialist II  
Maine State Board of Education