



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the June 26, 2026 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met at the Department of Health and Human Services Building, Androscoggin Room, 109 Capitol Street, Augusta and remotely via Zoom.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins, Chair; Paulette Bonneau; and Edmond Morin

OTHERS PRESENT:

Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities, Department of Education
Paula Gravelle, Director of Public School Finance, Department of Education
Ted Hall, School Facilities Consultant
Lyndon Keck, School Facilities Consultant (remote)
Ruey B. Yehle, School Facilities Consultant
John Suttie, Superintendent of Schools, RSU 23
Julie Kimball, Incoming Superintendent, MSAD 53
Ben Hall, School Board, Construction Committee Chair, MSAD 53
Shelby Thibodeau, Assistant Superintendent, Augusta School Department
Jon Stonier, Director of Buildings & Grounds, Augusta School Department
Martha Witham, School Board Chair, Augusta School Department
Kathy Cogan, Architecture, CHA Consulting
Robin Tannonbaum, Architecture, CHA Consulting
Ben Winschel, Architect, CHA Consulting
Ava Pendleton, Architecture Intern, CHA Consulting
Robbie Feinberg, Director of Communications and Government Relations, MSMA
Laura Cyr, Interim Director of Policy and Government Affairs, MDOE (remote)
Craig Flowers, Office Specialist, State Board of Education

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., welcomed everyone to the tenth meeting of the School Construction Committee's review of Chapter 61: State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Motioned by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the May 27, 2026 meeting minutes as written.

Motioned by Bonneau, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the June 12, 2026 special meeting minutes as written.

Desjardins introduced the next item on the agenda, *Public Comments*. There were no public comments from attendees in person or joining remotely. Desjardins mentioned her updated summary of comments received as of June 17, 2026, which would be discussed after tabled items were taken up.

Chair Desjardins introduced the next item on the agenda, *Major Capital School Construction Program Concept Approval Consideration for the MSAD 53 PreK-8 School Construction Project*. Brown provided background information before introducing Julie Kimball, Incoming Superintendent for MSAD 53.

Kimball mentioned she's been on the New School Committee for the last two years. She spoke of the analyses by CHA Consulting that resulted in a recommendation for a new PreK-8 school to replace the existing Manson Park School (grades PreK-K), Vickery School (grades 1-4) and the Warsaw Middle School (grades 5-8). The proposed plan utilizes district-owned land, allows students to remain in their current buildings until the new school is opened, and will serve as a "central hub for community engagement."

After questions by School Construction Committee members were answered by Kimball, Hall, and Cogan (e.g., heat source, equipment purchases), it was moved by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by School Construction Committee members that pursuant to MRS Title 20-A §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, this exhibit be placed on the July 17, 2026 State Board meeting agenda and the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to RSU 53/MSAD 53 for a new grades PreK-8 school construction project as presented.

Desjardins moved to the next item on the agenda, *Major Capital School Construction Program Concept Approval Consideration for the Augusta School Department Elementary School Construction Project*. Brown provided background information before introducing Shelby Thibodeau, Assistant Superintendent for the Augusta School Department.

Thibodeau spoke of the feasibility studies conducted by CHA Consulting, which resulted in a recommendation to close the Lillian Parks Hussey School and combine new construction with renovations at the existing Farrington Elementary School. This would accommodate the need to expand their early childhood and special education programs and services to their growing number of multilingual learners. The Hussey Elementary School opened 75 years ago. Two schools would

be consolidated into one on the district-owned site of the Farrington Elementary School to address academic and infrastructure needs.

After further discussion with Thibodeau and her team, it was moved by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by School Construction Committee members that pursuant to MRS Title 20-A §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, this exhibit be placed on the July 17, 2026 State Board meeting agenda and the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to Augusta Public Schools for an elementary school additions/renovations project as presented.

Desjardins introduced the next item on the agenda, *Chapter 61: State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects: Team Discussion and Proposed Amendments for Items Tabled in Sections 1-15*.

After much discussion on feedback received from E. William Stockmeyer at Drummond Woodsum, the Chapter 61 Team agreed to the following definitions in Section 1:

- “Cost Sharing” – Cost Sharing is the apportionment between the state and the SAU of the State Portion of the Project Budget as described in Section 11, subsection 4 below, that is based on the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) formula.
- Project Budget” – The listing of line item costs allocated to complete a school construction project that is finalized at the time of Final Funding Approval by the Commissioner, including the cost sharing.
- “State Portion” – The portion of the project budget that is approved for state funding after the cost sharing requirement is applied.

The next School Construction Committee meeting with Chapter 61 team members will be held virtually 10:00-12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 1, 2026 followed by another meeting 10:00-2:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 2 at the Department of Health and Human Services Building, Room A/B, 109 Capitol Street, Augusta and remotely via Zoom. The team will revisit items tabled in sections 1, 6, 10, 11, and 12 and public comments received but not discussed to date.

Desjardins adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.