



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the July 2, 2026 Meeting

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins, Chair; Paulette Bonneau (remote); 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

Ruey B. Yehle, School Facilities Consultant

Robbie Feinberg, Director of Communications and Government Relations, MSMA

Craig Flowers, Office Specialist, State Board of Education

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the twelfth meeting of the School Construction Committee's review of Chapter 61: State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

Desjardins introduced the next item on the agenda, *Public Comments*. There were no public comments from attendees or comments received since the last meeting.

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*.

The review team reached consensus on the following:

Section 1. Definitions

- In the definition of "Consolidation of Schools", "district" was changed to "SAU" and "districts" to "SAUs".
- The definition of "Local Cost Share" was added.

Section 7. Site Selection

- Subsection 2(E) was added.

Section 11. Financing School Construction

- Subsection 4(B) on Cost Sharing, inserted “island schools or” in the first line between “include” and “the”.

Section 15

- Subsection 2(E)(3), “districts” was changed to “SAUs”.

Chair Desjardins introduced the next item on the agenda, *Discussion of Public Comments*.

Members of the review team picked up from where they left off on July 1, 2026, starting with number 6 of the *Public Comments for Discussion July 2, 2026* document and ending with number 11.

- In response to the comment that some SAUs would not be able to afford the match in cost sharing, Gravelle spoke of the impact of LD 2226, PL 2026, Chapter 737 *An Act to Amend the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Formula* in the 132nd Maine Legislature. The new method for the required local contribution “introduces a 10% poverty weighting factor into the Mill Rate to better reflect local economic capacity. The adjustment is calculated based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students residing within the SAU. The Higher Poverty SAUs benefit from a reduced Mill Rate, recognizing the lower aggregate property wealth and higher relative need.”
- The review team discussed all comments received.

Having reached agreement on all proposed amendments to Rule Chapter 61 and discussed all public comments received to date, Desjardins distributed an exhibit for School Construction Committee members’ consideration.

Motioned by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by those present that pursuant to MRS Title 20-A §15905(4) this exhibit be placed on the July 17, 2026 State Board meeting agenda and that the State Board of Education approve the attached proposal of amendments to Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, and move the proposal forward through the Major Substantive Rules process in obtaining rule adoption of the amendments.

The next School Construction Committee meeting will be held in person at 9:00 a.m. on Friday July 31 at the Department of Health and Human Services Building, Room A/B, 109 Capitol Street, Augusta and remotely via Zoom.

Desjardins adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.