

Statement of Factual and Policy Basis and Summary of Comments/Responses

State Board of Education

State Board of Education Chapter 115, Part I Standards and Procedures for Credentialing, Part II Requirements for Specific Certificates and Endorsements

Factual and Policy Basis:

The State Board is proposing substantial changes to Chapter 115 in order to enhance the educator workforce by improving the clarity, simplicity, and flexibility within the rules for certification, as well as to make changes in accordance with statutory revisions. The State Board endeavors to improve the rule by balancing the expectations for well-qualified individuals with the desire for a robust educator workforce i.e., skilled, diverse, compassionate, engaged, inspiring, motivated, and caring.

The proposed changes in Chapter 115 include, but are not limited to:

- Updating professional standards for administrator certificates
- An additional option for Educational Technician certification preparation
- Emergency and reciprocal certification provisions
- Removal of qualifying examination requirements. For teachers, this requirement was replaced with the option to take a basic skills test, provide evidence of a 3.0 cumulative GPA in the courses required for the certificate/endorsement, or the review of a portfolio that includes evidence of the Initial Teaching Standards.
- Improved Career and Technical Education (CTE) program and endorsement alignment, as well as increased flexibilities for currently certified teachers
- Updating many grade spans to include pre-kindergarten
- Clarification of course requirements for special education certificates, as well as an additional pathway for current Educational Technician IIIs
- Removal of the Adapted Physical Education, Special Education Consultant, and Speech and Language Consultant certificates/endorsements
- Additional course requirements including 3 hours of coursework in diversity-centered content related to today's classroom (for most certificates and endorsements) and 3 hours of coursework in human development, educational psychology, developmental psychology, adolescent psychology, or child development, for teacher certificates and endorsements
- Added a School Health and Physical Education combined teacher endorsement
- Variety of updates to Educational Specialist certificates, include the Library Media Specialist, School Counselor, and School Psychologist

Some of these proposals necessitated changes in statute first and were included in LD 1189, which became Public Law 2021, Chapter 228 on June 16, 2021.

Consensus-Based Rule Development Process

The proposed changes are the result of the convening of a stakeholder group in May 2020 and a consensus-based rule development process that was conducted over a seven-month period.

Pursuant to 5 M.R.S. 8051-B(3), the State Board has retained the required records reflecting the consensus-based rule development process.

Comments and Responses:

A public hearing on the proposed State Board of Education Chapter 115 Parts I and II was held on August 16, 2021. At the hearing, seven individuals commented on the proposed regulation. All of these individuals also submitted written comments.

The deadline for submission of written comments was September 15, 2021. Forty-three sets of written comments were submitted by that date. Written comments were received from the following:

1. Heather Balfour, Dayton School Department
2. Tim Pearson
3. Margaret Harvey, MDOE
4. Wendy Toole, Portland School Department
5. Alica Johnson-Grafe, MMA President
6. Tim Surette, Ed.D.
7. Deborah L. Drew, Ed.D, Husson University
8. Barbara Moody, Maine Head Start Directors Association
9. Dana McDaniel, University of Southern Maine
10. Rose Marie Angell
11. John Kosinski, MEA
12. Kerry Jackson, Lewiston Schools
13. Stephen Butterfield, University of Maine
14. Tori Kornfield
15. Anita Charles, Bates College
16. Flynn Ross
17. Michael Dixon
18. Rose Mari Angell, Chair of the Adaptive Physical Education
19. Becky Belmore, SAD 51
20. Julie Olsen, Carla Fancy, SAD 51
21. Ross Sirois
22. Cristina Sirois, SAD 59
23. Tom Keller, Ed.D.
24. Robert Kennedy, RSU 24
25. Paulette Bonneau, Biddeford CTE
26. Ethan Davis, Biddeford
27. Allyson Perron, Maine Science Teachers Association (MSTA)
28. Vicki Wallack, MSMA
29. Andrea Stairs-Davenport, Associate Dean, USM

30. Robert Placido, Vice Chancellor, UMS
31. Maine DOE Advisory Committee on School Psychologists
32. Jamie Pratt and Mark Steege, Department of Educational and School Psychology
33. Sara Flannigan, Teacher
34. Suzanne Chevalier, Portland, Pre-K EL
35. Walter Brown and Rachel-Brown Chidsey, USM
36. Valerie Smith, Bucksport
37. Julia Hazel, Portland Public Schools
38. Carlos Gomez, Portland Public Schools
39. Dr. Janet Santor, Jane Loxtercamp, Eastern Maine Community College
40. Deb Smith, Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
41. Melinda Butler, USM
42. Emily Kelley, Health Care and a parent
43. Amy Johnson, Janet Fairman, MEPRI

The Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Education is very appreciative of the time and thought that went into each comment, both at the hearing and those that were submitted subsequently. The Committee spent a considerable amount of time discussing the statements and ideas within each and prepared the following responses.

General

1. **Comment (#4):** Commenter reflects enthusiastic support of Rule Chapter 115. Commenter supports eliminating excessive barriers for internationally born educators. All students, not just BIPOC students, would benefit from a more diverse and multilingual educator-workforce.
Response: No change was made because of this comment.
2. **Comment (#23):** Commenter suggests three new areas for the State Board to consider:
 1. Consider promulgating a set of actual teaching standards. Michigan, for example, is preparing a set of standards for the preparation of middle school science teachers. These are more specific and actionable than Maine's Common Core Teaching Standards. These standards direct instruction and preparation of teachers to the important outcomes that are needed for success by K-12 students.
 2. Consider promulgating the criteria for a high quality teacher preparation program. As it is, Maine has at least 15 institutions that prepare teachers. Analyzing the Higher Education Act Title II data reveals that institutions apply resources differently and provide lesser and greater support.
 3. Consider broadening the teams for program approval visits for education preparation programs. The current teams are composed of only faculty from other Maine education preparation programs. And soon the education preparation programs at the home campuses of the team members will undergo a review. I suggest adding to the teams to provide transparency, credibility, and broader understanding. Additional members could come from Teachers of the Year, the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, other

professional educator associations in Maine like MPA and the Maine Science Teachers Association, educational researchers from non-profits in Maine, and even legislators.

Response: *Teaching standards are not included in Chapter 115. The standards and procedures for the review and approval of educator preparation programs are part of Chapter 114, as well as team composition and procedures for program approval visits. No change was made because of this comment.*

3. Comment (#36): Commenter raises some concerns about inconsistencies between Part I and II:

Chapter 115 Part I

- I appreciate that Part I clearly outlines who is responsible for ensuring that each teacher holds the appropriate certificate, and the penalties for violation of this rule.
- I greatly appreciate the inclusion of § 6.1.E, which outlines Maine licensure for those holding out-of-state certificates. With the current shortage of qualified educators, and the chronic special educator shortage in Maine, it is important to state an explicit process to welcome qualified educators to Maine.
- Finally, I support elimination of the certification waiver for special education endorsements. Children who receive special education services need individualized support to make adequate progress in their education. The chronic shortage of fully qualified special educators often means that they face a revolving door of inexperienced and under-prepared educators; it is reasonable to require at least minimal (presently, 3 semester hours) coursework in special education for these new teachers. In the past, it was possible for those with special educator certificate waivers to continue to teach indefinitely with this certificate option.
- On p. 27, § 3, Components of A(n) LCC Plan B (3), it states that the plan must *(p)rovide for a formal orientation for professionally and certified teachers ...*

Are those with conditional and emergency certificates included in the “and certified teachers” category? I wonder if it might make sense to state “...*formal orientation for certified teachers...*”, which includes teachers at all certificate levels.

Response: *Regarding the Local Credentialing Committee Plan, the language will be changed to read “provide for a formal orientation for all new teachers...”.*

Part II

- The more specific guidance for those on Eligibility Pathway 2 is consistent with that of a majority of other states, and ensures that those earning professional certificates through an alternate pathway have at least minimal expertise across skill areas necessary for the endorsement. Currently, alternate pathway candidates who are not matriculated into a post-baccalaureate or graduate level teacher preparation program may take classes that are convenient, rather than those that are needed to establish adequate professional knowledge.
- I support the addition of a pathway for educational technician III to teacher as an option for a conditional certificate. Ed tech III professionals in special education

comprise a majority of those seeking professional certificates through alternate pathways.

- I notice that some certificate endorsements stipulate that the applicant must complete a minimum of 24 semester hours in the area being sought. This includes
 - o Middle Level Endorsement
 - o Secondary
 - o Pre-K to 12 Teacher (other than art and music)
 - o World Languages
 - o ESOL
 - o Adult Ed
 - o Library Media Specialist
 - o School Counselor
 - o SED 286, 291, 292 (see below)

For example: here is the language for a Conditional Endorsement for 286, 291, and 292:

Conditional Certificate for this Endorsement

1. Earned at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, in accordance with Part I Section 6.1 of this rule; and

2. Completed a minimum of 24 semester hours in the areas relevant to the endorsement being sought. [emphasis is mine]

I am puzzled, does the Department propose requiring the completion of 24 semester hours prior to issuing a conditional certificate for each of these endorsements? My understanding is that 9 hours are currently required to earn a conditional certificate, and 24 are required for a professional certificate. As currently stated, the rule appears to require 24 semester hours to earn a conditional certificate. Hopefully this is an editing error, rather than a deliberate change.

I notice that the 282 Conditional Certificate Endorsement requires the candidate to participate in a Maine-approved program for mentoring, but this is not required for a Conditional 286, 291, or 292 Endorsement. Hopefully, this was an editing error. Those working with students with low incidence disabilities have an equal need for intensive, targeted support during their first year. Special educators leave the field within the first five years at a much higher rate than do their peers in general education, and at an even greater rate than do their peers working with students with less intense support needs. I strongly suggest that mentoring be required for any conditionally certified special educator.

Similarly, there appears to be no 286, 291, or 292 Conditional Certificate Educational Technician III. Hopefully, this is an editing error.

The 286, 291, and 292 Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2 appears to leave no room for additional elective courses, other than the “content area methods course,” that reflect the

endorsement specialization area. The inclusion of a course in human development, educational, developmental, adolescent development; or child psychology may be less necessary than would be a course tailored to a specific population.”

Response: *Regarding the semester hours requirements, in most cases, 24 semester hours for a conditional, including that for 286, 291, and 292 is not a proposed change, but legacy language. In regards to mentoring, the mentoring requirement will be added to the conditional 286, 291, and 292 requirements. The 286, 291, or 292 Conditional Certificates Educational Technician III are specialized endorsements; therefore, the Educational Technician III pathway is not appropriate. The three hours in human development, educational psychology, developmental psychology, adolescent psychology, or child psychology is deemed to be a foundational course for all educators. No other changes were made because of these comments.*

4. **Comment (#37):** Commenter has suggestions for Part I: “Our most critical suggestion is that you make the certification process and MEIS website as clear and user-friendly as possible. First, in the process, please make clear to candidates receiving their letter of evaluation that it’s possible to appeal if they believe a course they took should be reconsidered as meeting a requirement. It is also often confusing to people that in some cases they must request that the conditional certificate be issued after they receive that letter, or that they do not renew a conditional certificate, they must apply again for their professional certification. These steps could be made clearer. The new Emergency Certification has provided a pathway for promising educators who don’t yet meet the requirements for Conditional Certification. We are so glad it exists. However, we feel concerned that as this certification is valid for only one year, educators bear a financial burden by having to pay \$100 each year they must apply for it. This could be changed so that these educators, who are also taking several courses a year, are not unduly burdened. Finally, we want to point out that many educators for whom English is not their first language are proficient in English and do not require tutoring, a requirement indicated in the proposed changes. It’s important to avoid bias in how that exception is written.”

Response: *The certification process, MEIS website, and fees charged for certificates or endorsements are not covered in rule Chapter 115. There is no requirement for tutoring for educators for whom English is not their first language. No change was made because of this comment.*

5. **Comment (#39):** Commenter believes these proposed changes will offer the clarification and flexibility needed to assure our education workforce can meet the needs of all of Maine’s students—from Pre-K through graduation—and will provide our future learners with high quality teachers and paraprofessional staff.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

6. **Comment (#43):** Commenter provided the following principle for credentialing:

In recent years the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) has prepared several reports that have relevance to teacher credentialing requirements, including:

- Fallona and Johnson (January 2017). “An Examination of Features of Evidence-Based Teacher Credentialing Systems.”
- Fairman, Mills, Lech, and Johnson (June 2020). “Maine Principals’ Perceptions of Beginning Teacher Preparation.”
- Johnson and Morris (June 2021). Certification Patterns of Grades K-8 Teachers in Maine Public School Districts.”
- Morris and Johnson (April 2018). “Teacher Turnover in Maine: Analysis of Staffing Patterns, 2005-06 to 2016-17.”
- Jessen, Fairman, Fallona and Johnson (April 2020). “Considering Grow Your Own Models: Examining Teacher Preparation Models in Maine”

These full reports are available at <http://mepri.maine.edu>.

This document attempts to synthesize the analyses and findings from these studies that are related to proposed changes in Education Rule Chapter 115. This document does not attempt to address *all* of the many proposed rule revisions, as only some of our analyses have direct relevance. For example, our research has been focused on teachers and therefore we are not commenting on proposed changes to other credentialed staff positions.

General Background:

Teacher licensure plays a key gatekeeping role. In these times of widespread staff shortages there is an inherent tension between the need to fill open positions and the desire to give all students equitable access to highly-skilled teachers. Research confirms that some prospective educators are indeed deterred from pursuing teaching when requirements are burdensome – and this particularly impedes the recruitment of teachers of color as well as lower-income and first-generation college students. On the other hand, licensure systems that incorporate evidence-based measures of teacher quality do help to improve overall educator effectiveness. It is thus a considerable policy challenge to set expectations that will ensure a minimum level of competence and also encourage excellence. We have suggested this general framework:

Recognize that **licensure is only one piece** of the “teacher quality” system. Schools also play a critical role hiring and promotion, and in many ways are better positioned to evaluate teacher quality because they have access to real-time performance measures. Ideally, the framework for teacher licensure should exist within a larger vision of managing teacher quality that relegates appropriate processes for the SEA and the LEA based on their distinct roles.

Recognize that measuring teacher quality is imprecise, and sometimes subjective. The use of **multiple valid and reliable measures** is preferable when feasible.

Almost all states, including Maine, incorporate more than one level of licensure. This allows policymakers to set different requirements for different levels of expectations and responsibility. Lower levels of licensure require more oversight and professional support than higher credential levels to ensure that students' needs are met. The number of levels, and the meaning of each level, is variable. However, in order to reach agreement on the requirements of any given type of licensure, stakeholders should have a **shared and common understanding of the meaning of each license level**. For example, is the entry level certificate meant to denote only that an individual has been deemed minimally qualified to “do no harm” in times of severe staff shortage? Or should the lowest bar be set at a higher level – such as meeting the INTASC initial teaching standards – with the knowledge that schools may then need to hire an unlicensed individual in times of emergency? The number and meaning of the tiers should then guide the specific criteria for each level.

The empirical knowledge base on teacher quality is still growing. Research has established this much:

Content knowledge matters. It is common sense that teachers must have a solid grasp of the subject(s) they are trying to teach to others, and empirical research has convincingly established that this is indeed the case. Because curricula become more demanding across the grade span this means that secondary teachers need to have deeper content knowledge than elementary teachers. However, this is not an exact science; there is no hard and fast guidance on exactly what minimum content should be required for any given grade level.

Experience matters. Teacher effectiveness increases with each year of practice, with the steepest improvements made in the first years. After about three years of experience, teacher growth continues but at a slower pace.

Teaching (pedagogical) skill is also important, but must be measured through a valid **performance-based assessment**. Thus skills are harder to evaluate on paper than content knowledge or years of experience. Grades earned in education courses tend to capture a mix of theoretical and applied knowledge, and only sometimes incorporate demonstration of *learned skills*. As a result, research that uses education course grades as a measure of pedagogical skill shows only a weak relationship between the average grades and teachers' impact on student achievement.

Response: The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6. No other changes were made based on this comment.

Part I STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR CREDENTIALING

SECTION 1. Purpose

SECTION 2. Applicability

1. **Comment (#28):** Commenter stated “We support removing the exemption for public charter schools around the certification rules since charters are defined as public schools in statute.”

Response: 20-A M.R.S. 2412(6)(B) provides that charter school teachers do not all have to be certified. Nothing in rule can override the statute. No change was made because of this comment.

SECTION 3. Definitions

SECTION 4. General Credential Requirements

1. **Comment (#28):** Commenter stated, “Under the responsibility of the superintendent, we support changing the requirement that superintendents verify credentials annually versus every six months.”

Response: No change was made because of this comment.

SECTION 5. General Issuance and Renewal Requirements

SECTION 6. Credentials Available and Eligibility Requirements

1. **Comment (#21):** Commenter was wondering if the state has set up a site or somewhere that a person looking to apply for their teachers certification under the new conditional standards would be able to go to. Commenter would like more information about this.

Response: See <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cert> No change was made because of this comment.

2. **Comment (#22):** Commenter would love a checklist or some way to organize applying for a conditional.

Response: See <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/requirements> No change was made because of this comment.

3. **Comment (#28):** Commenter reflected “we support the new section on out-of-state licensure that says administrators, teachers or specialists holding a full certificate by another state or other country deemed comparable may qualify for Maine certification. This makes sense and will help in our recruitment to fill vacancies and attract qualified people from out-of-state to work in Maine.

In the same section, we support making all teacher certificates renewable for a 5-year term and removing the 10-year-term exception for National Board Certifications for consistency sake.

We applaud the inclusion of the Emergency Educational Technician and the reference to a program now offered at Eastern Maine Community College to allow for an expedited pathway to Ed Tech certifications to deal with shortages in the field. Can and should this program be expanded through the Community College System to raise visibility given the shortage of Educational Technicians some districts are facing?

We also support the Emergency Teacher Certificate with the parameters outlined in the rule and the appropriate limit of three, one-year certificates.

Response: *No change was made as a result of this comment.*

- 4. Comment (#30):** Commenter raises concerns about the Emergency credential. “The permanent Emergency Teacher Certificate proposed in Part I Standards and Procedures for Credentialing would greatly undermine teacher quality, and ultimately harm both Maine students and the educator workforce. Adequate teacher preparation must not be considered a “barrier” to joining Maine’s educator workforce, rather the baseline. Teacher preparation must be supported accordingly with public policy and investment like State funding for residency models that allow individuals to remain employed while pursuing necessary teacher education.

As written in the proposed rule, an Emergency Teacher Certificate could allow an individual to teach students in Maine schools for up to three years having never taken a single content or pedagogy course – or even passed a criminal history records check (CHRC).

All Maine students deserve consistent access to high-quality teachers and school leaders. Underprepared teachers lead to lower levels of achievement for all students, but disproportionately harm those in high-poverty schools and/or who are historically underserved. Without provisions that ensure those certified through alternative pathways are prepared to at least a minimum standard before taking full classroom responsibility, and that their professional practice and growth is continually supported, Maine risks undoing the important work being led by the Department, State Board, schools, and our own institutions to close achievement gaps and advance social mobility through equitable access to competent educators.

Before permanently enacting this emergency certification, we strongly encourage the Department or the Maine Legislature’s Education and Cultural Affairs Committee to commission our colleagues at MEPRI to evaluate the initial outcomes for workforce retention of emergency educational technician and teacher certificate holders temporarily authorized by Executive Order during the COVID-19 pandemic. This should include analysis of the demographics of the schools in which emergency licensees are working, considering factors like geography and the percentages of students who are economically disadvantaged, have IEPs, or are English learners. It would also be important to evaluate the impact of underprepared teachers on student learning to the extent possible. As the Department’s own Teach Maine draft strategic plan notes.

If the State Board is determined to move forward at this time with the Emergency Teacher Certificate, at a minimum UMS urges the following amendments to the proposed rule:

To protect the safety of Maine students and school communities, satisfactory completion of a CHRC must be required of all applicants.

The certificate-holder must maintain continued enrollment in an approved educator preparation program and be making satisfactory progress toward the intended degree or credential, rather than simply being enrolled in a program at the time of application for emergency licensure.

Define what constitutes “equivalent work or academic experience” to a four-year postsecondary degree.

Better define mentorship and supervision requirements to ensure that induction is of high quality and continues for the entire duration of the emergency certification period.

Require assurance from employing districts that the emergency certified teacher has satisfactorily met evaluation standards of the district’s approved PEPG system in order for the Commissioner to grant a renewal.

As a technical matter, the State Board may wish to clarify whether the Emergency Education Technician certification obtained through a fast-track online training course that results in Ed Tech III authorization would be all that is required to fulfill the “holds a certification as an Educational Technician III” pathway to an Emergency Teacher Certificate. We sincerely hope this is not the intention, as that program is designed to prepare individuals to be paraprofessionals who assist teachers as part of a larger teaching team.

It should be noted that while some of the proposed changes to Chapter 115 were informed by the consensus-based rulemaking committee on which several UMS educator preparation faculty participated, emergency certification was not included in the purview of that process. Thus, it has not yet been vetted by the Professional Standards Board of key stakeholders, though we acknowledge it is generally aligned with authority granted by P.L. 2021, Chapter 228 (LD 1189).”

***Response:** This language was added to the Rule as a result of P.L. 2021, Chapter 228. There is a typographical error in the proposed rule which will be corrected. The error would have allowed for a candidate to hold only a CHRC to be eligible. Instead, this is a requirement which is in addition to each of the subsequent options. The satisfactory completion of a CHRC continues to be required of those who apply for or are renewing a credential pursuant to 20-A section 6103(1). No other changes were made because of this comment.*

5. **Comment (#11):** Commenter raises two questions.

a. **Emergency Ed Tech Certification: Why do we need an emergency ed tech certification?**

Commenter sees in the rules language which they assume is to provide Ed Tech III certifications to those that complete the course via EMMC. Completion of the EMMC qualifies one for ed tech III certification found here:

(C) Educational Technician III: document a minimum of 90 credits of approved study in an educationally related field; or, successfully complete a Maine program approved for targeting essential skills and knowledge for performing permitted responsibilities; or, for career and technical education certification, document a minimum of three years of paid applied employment within the field of assignment.

(A) Emergency Educational Technician: successfully complete a Maine program approved for targeting essential skills and knowledge for performing permitted responsibilities.

Why would there be a need for a separate emergency ed tech certification?

- b. Commenter noticed the elimination in part E of the grandparenting provision, found here:

“Our recollection is that this has been an ongoing grandparenting provision dating back to when they had the former teacher assistant/teacher aide classification system. Anyone who was a teacher assistant (I think that was the higher designation) automatically was cross walked over to an Ed Tech III even if they didn’t meet the education requirements, since they had already effectively been doing the job. If this is eliminated, those individuals would now have to qualify with either 90 credits or approve that new training program. I have no idea how many there may be, but I worry even a handful or more could create some concern for new legislation or the need to reinstate a provision that allows those individuals to maintain their ed tech III certification.”

Response: Emergency Educational Technician Certificates were established by P.L. 2021, Chapter 228. In addition, all Educational Technician Authorizations were already converted to Educational Technician Certifications, and thus the grandparenting is not necessary. No changes were made because of this comment.

SECTION 7. Revocation, Suspension, Denial and Nonrenewal of a Credential

1. **Comment (#28):** Commenter indicated “This new section on revocation of a credential was difficult for our members because of its implications around the safety of the students we serve. While it aligns with statute it is nearly impossible to define the “compelling evidence of rehabilitation” the rule and statute references.”

Response: This language was established within the parameters of Title 5 and 20-A. Further remedy would need to be sought in statute. No change was made because of this comment.

SECTION 8. Records and Reports

SECTION 9. Local Credentialing Committees (LCC)

Part II Requirements for Specific Certificates and Endorsements

1. **Comment (#1):** Commenter provided the following suggestions:

a. Having social workers obtain certification through the MDOE. Every other New England state requires this step. Based on my experiences, I think it would be EXTREMELY valuable to have this step in place to help train/mentor/guide social workers in what their role is in the public school setting.

b. Allowing social workers to obtain administrator certification. I have been told that I am not allowed to do so by the MDOE (unless it is Assistant Sped Director). School Counselors (which my role is very similar) are allowed to obtain this certification, so I'm not sure why there is this discrepancy. I could go on and on, but for the purposes of this email, I would like to know if this would be an opportunity to add that into the Part II changes under Administrators. The wording could be the same as the wording used for Assistant SPED Director. Commenter also reflected asks that you consider requiring school social workers to be credentialed through the MDOE. "I would also ask that you consider allowing school social workers to be eligible for administrative certification or create an alternative pathway for them to seek administrative certification. As someone with 14 years of experience in public education, a master's level degree in social work (requiring 60 graduate credit hours versus the 30 that many master's level teacher programs require) and a graduate certificate from UMO in Behavioral RTI, I struggle to understand why I would be considered to be unqualified for the position upon my completion of the Certificate of Graduate Study in Assistant Principalship (I have 2 out of 5 classes completed as of the date of this public comment).

Response: *Social workers are licensed by the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, and like other licensed roles in school settings, shouldn't have the additional burden of certification. No change was made because of this comment.*

2. **Comment (#2):** Commenter questions what is meant by "removal of 515 Adapted PE teacher"?

Response: *This means that the proposal was to eliminate the Adapted Physical Education Teacher endorsement. No change was made because of this comment.*

3. **Comment (#3):** Commenter has a concern with the Chapter 115 Part II proposed revisions. In the priority notice the description of the changes includes the required coursework *or their equivalent*. The actual revision language does not include this language. I know that this has been a big issue with CTE instructors trying to become certified, they have the courses but the language appears to say they have to be repeated or taken during the conditional period. Potential CTE teachers do not want to repeat academic course work they have already completed. I suggest adding the "or their equivalent" language to the law as well and specifying that it does not need to be during (it can be before) the conditional period.

Priority notice description of changes: Removal of language regarding pedagogical assessment as all CTE certifications would require completion of pedagogical courses, or their equivalent.

Proposed Rule revisions

SECTION 3: TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS: CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) CERTIFICATES AND ENDORSEMENTS

3.1 Endorsement: Secondary Career and Technical Education Teacher

B. Eligibility: Applicants shall meet eligibility requirements specified in Part I. In addition, eligibility for this endorsement shall be established by one of five pathways. Individuals who are not eligible through any of these pathways may be eligible for a conditional certificate, in accordance with Section 3.1.B.2, below, and Part I Section 6.6 of this rule.

1. Requirements for all Pathways:

During the three conditional certificates, completed 12 semester hours in the following areas: curriculum and instruction, assessment, CTE shop safety and classroom/lab management (during the first year of the conditional certificate), and literacy in CTE; Does not say or their equivalent.

Response: The current version of the rule included four specific courses; the proposed rule allows for 12 credits in the areas identified – creating flexibility. No change made because of this comment.

4. **Comment (#5):** Commenter is excited by the proposed change to increase eligibility for teacher certification in Maine by offering an alternative pathway to certification for Ed Tech III. Many of the Montessori credentialed teachers in Maine have an Ed Tech III certification but have been unable to receive their state teacher certification because their Montessori coursework is not recognized by Maine Department of Education Teacher Certification. On behalf of the Maine Montessori Association (MMA). Commenter would like to include teachers with Montessori teaching credentials in the alternative pathway to state teacher certification as a way to expand and build capacity in our certified teacher workforce. Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, Ohio, South Carolina, and Wisconsin are examples of other states that have made this state licensure possible (click here to learn more about each state's current licensure status regarding Montessori teacher credentials).

Response: As defined in Part I, only courses from an accredited college or university are allowed, which ensures a standard of educational quality. No change was made because of this comment.

5. **Comment (#6):** Commenter suggests the ME DOE include a mechanism in Chapter 115 that accepts students' portfolios if they are applying for an additional endorsement outside of what their University recommended them for. For example, for a student who graduates with a Bachelor of Science in early elementary and a minor in B-5, the state should have some mechanism to say, this student has completed the portfolio requirement under Chapter 115.

***Response:** A candidate who wishes to apply for a second endorsement could utilize a portfolio option for the second endorsement as well. No change was made because of this comment.*

- 6. Comment (#7):** Commenter is pleased to see that the proposed changes seek to align the requirements for 075 School Counselor certification with CACREP requirements, a standard in the profession. I support this alignment. Currently reviews are conducted using a list of required courses that align with CACREP requirements, a practice that has been long-standing, but not specifically written into Chapter 115. This revision will make that requirement much more transparent to the public. Commenter does have a few specific concerns about these proposed revisions:

1. 1.12, section 2 Certificate Eligibility, Pathway 2.a. calls for a master's or doctorate degree, but the sentence below refers to bachelor's degree. School Counseling programs are graduate programs, not undergraduate programs. I suggest striking bachelor's degree from that sentence.

2. 1.12 section 2.a. A CACREP accredited program in School Counseling requires completion of a minimum of 48 credits now (60 credits by 2023) in 8 Core areas as well as the School Counseling specialty areas listed. This should be specified. Some school counseling programs are "aligned" with CACREP standards but not accredited. Is it intended that these would be recognized under Pathway 2? If so, coursework will require review to determine alignment.

3. 1.12 section 2.b. A CACREP accredited program already includes coursework that meets diversity typically through a course in social and cultural diversity and diversity and other objectives within the School Counseling specialty courses. Given that, is this requirement needed? It is true that some graduates of older school counseling programs, or those that are not CACREP accredited, may not have had this coursework. Is it intended that those graduate would need to take such a course or courses?

3. Regarding section 3 Conditional Certificate: The 24 credit requirement for conditional certification was established in the 1970s when such graduate programs were only 33 or 36 credits in length (2/3 of the program). Today's programs are a minimum of 48 credits. Maine approved CACREP accredited programs have long met the 60 credit standard that CACREP will move to in 2023. 24 credits is only half of the minimum 48 credits and only 40% of 60 credits. People with less than half of the training are not prepared to enter a school counseling profession where the futures and mental health of students are daily concerns. I am very aware of the shortage of school counselors in Maine, especially in the northern 2/3 of the state, but also very concerned that we are enabling people to enter the profession long before they are prepared to do so. In my opinion this presents a liability concern for the school who employs a conditionally certified school counselor and for the person who seeks such employment. School counselors regularly deal with suicidal ideation, child abuse and neglect, and other serious social and emotional issues presented by students of all ages. If this small number of credits required for conditional

certification is allowed to continue to be the standard, then I strongly recommend that a requirement be added that conditionally certified school counselors be supervised directly by qualified and experienced supervisors trained in school counseling.

Response: *With respect to your concerns:*

1. *This is to allow for appropriate coursework taken during a bachelor's degree program to "count" toward the requirements.*
2. *Transcript analysis will determine alignment.*
3. *A number of options are available in the rule and a transcript analysis would determine accomplishment of this requirement.*
4. *24 semester hours demonstrates a significant commitment to accomplishing the minimum requirements.*

No change was made because of this comment.

7. **Comment (#8):** Commenter reflects "The Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education are to be commended for their thorough and transparent processes of revision for Rules and Chapters. The efforts to include a broad spectrum of stakeholders and the meticulous review of Rules provides consistency across these Rules and allows for the adaptation of these Rules in response to contemporary educational contexts in Maine.

The Maine Head Start Directors Association is particularly focused on those proposed changes that influence early education. As the premier evidence-based early childhood program in the country, Head Start has a stake in early childhood teacher quality. The change in grade spans in Chapter 115 Part II to include PK in any certification previously starting with K is of concern to us. This concern stems from the apparent disregard of early childhood experts' input into these grade span changes.

In the fall of 2018, the Department conducted a series of focus groups with Deans and Directors of Teacher preparation programs. The result of these events was a strong recommendation that PK should not be added to certifications beginning with K because it would result in teachers who were poorly prepared for early childhood education. The content and knowledge necessary to teach young children is specialized in the early grades and cannot be included in preparation for K-6, K-8, or K-12 certifications due to the breadth and depth of the field of early childhood education.

Adding PK to all certification beginning with K is a disservice to our students and will have a detrimental effect on the future of Maine's children. Research clearly indicates that inclusion in high quality PK programs has a positive impact on lifetime income, health, educational attainment, and a myriad of other socio-economic factors. Benefits extend into the next generation (Schweinhart, L. et al.). We cannot afford to graduate teachers who are under-prepared for PK education, for the convenience of certification or job placement flexibility. Maine's young children deserve teachers who have been trained in the specific skills and knowledge necessary to guide the education of our youngest children.

Response: *The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6. The Early Elementary Teacher (029) and Early Childhood Teacher (081) endorsements remain available to applicants. No other changes were made because of this comment.*

8. **Comment (#9):** Commenters are delighted to see that Hebrew, Arabic, and American Sign Language are being added to the list of World Languages for certification. We have been looking forward to the addition of ASL for many years. We offer a series of nine ASL courses and a degree in ASL Linguistics. We will pursue adding a pathway to support students seeking World Language certification in ASL. We also offer four levels of Arabic and may be able to expand that program in the future. Commenter “noticed that the alternative to the 24 content course credits is put in terms of the oral and written ACTFL exams: “Earned a score of “Advanced Low” or higher on both the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview and the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test in the world language endorsement area being sought.” Commenter assumes that for languages that don’t have one or both of these tests, the requirement is replaced by equivalent tests, such as the ones included in the requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy. In the case of ASL, the equivalent of an advanced ACTFL score is a score of 4 or higher on the ASLPI.”

Response: *The language will be updated with a required Avant score as well as a required ASLPI score.*

9. **Comment (#10):** Commenter questions on page 9 of Part 2, 510 & 520 and other endorsements have been deleted. Commenter also questions that the State Board of education is proposing only 1 Endorsement or certificate for health and physical education and that is the combined certificate or endorsement found on page 28?

Response: *In section 1.5 (PK-12 Teacher Endorsement), the endorsements were reordered. Endorsements 510 (physical education) and 520 (health) have not been eliminated. Section 1.18 introduces a new endorsement that will be available in addition to 510 and 520. No change was made because of this comment.*

10. **Comment (#12):** Commenter shared the following comment:

“I am writing to you today to talk about the current shortage that we are currently facing in Maine across the country. I know that individuals currently have the availability to get an emergency teaching certification if they meet specific requirements, but we still have a large void in our ed-tech positions. As an educator, I learned more during my time as an ed-tech than I did during my student teaching experiences.

Student teaching was a guided and highly supported situation but it did not give me an accurate view of what I would be doing as a teacher; it was a much more sheltered view. Being an ed-tech showed me more of the day-to-day of education. When I started my educational career I was working towards becoming a general education teacher in the K-3 setting. Special education was not a thought in my mind, except for the mandatory class

I had to take for my program. After becoming an ed-tech I found my passion and started working towards a master's degree in special education, and then my new path began.

Because of this I feel that I gained more experience and this made me a stronger educator and now a stronger special education supervisor.

My question; is waiving student teaching a possibility for initial teacher certification, and in place, they are able to apply for ed-tech positions throughout the state, but still also attend the required classes/trainings that are part of their programs? As ed techs, student teachers would still be under the guidance of a classroom teacher, in many cases, they would be the sole person presenting information to students (under the supervision of the teacher), and would be able to receive payments for their experiences. This would not only give more real-world experiences but would also possibly provide a solution to a large growing shortage.”

***Response:** Educational Technician III certification can lead to an emergency teacher certification. No change was made because of this comment.*

- 11. Comment (#13):** Commenter strongly “encourages you and other committee members to retain the APE endorsement. This endorsement was designed to include coursework and experiences that go beyond customary undergraduate training but that are essential to delivery of quality physical education to children and youth with disabilities. As I am sure you know, physical education is required under Federal and State law.

The APE endorsement, as currently designed, requires competence in methods of teaching APE, conducting assessments and writing related reports and development of the individualized physical education program. These areas are only marginally included in undergraduate programs. I sincerely thank you for your attention to this important matter. “

***Response:** The Board recognizes the value of adding the requirement to complete an Adapted Physical Education course for all holders of the School Health and Physical Education endorsement. The Board also recognizes the expertise provided by holders of this endorsement and therefore will reinstate the adapted physical education endorsement.*

- 12. Comment (#14):** Commenter would like the four grade spans to be reverted to PK-3, K-6, 5-8 and 6-12 which was supported by a MEPRI report.

***Response:** The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6.*

- 13. Comment (#15):** Commenter had a series of comments:

- a. Feels there should be a methods coursework and student teaching as part of Pathway 2.
- b. Having separate coursework in diversity and developmental psychology would be a challenge for private schools.

- c. What is the timeline for the new courses? It usually takes two years to develop new courses.
- d. Could the content be infused into existing courses?
- e. K-12 special education is a very long span and should be reconsidered.
- f. The grade spans should not shift to PK from K.
- g. Concern *decreased* accountability and requirements for licensure for some pathways, including the recent emergency order, there have in fact been *increased* accountability and requirements for licensure for TE Programs.

Response: *With respect to your comments/questions:*

- a. *These requirements already exist in Pathway 2.*
- b. *The consensus-based rulemaking committee, Professional Standards Board, and State Board of Education all deemed that courses in diversity and psychology are foundational courses for all educators.*
- c. *Educator Preparation Programs have until their next renewal to comply.*
- d. *No.*
- e. *Special education teachers are trained to address a wide range of developmental needs regardless of grade level.*
- f. *The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6.*
- g. *Chapter 114 has not been changed. Other changes are meant to address the impact of emergencies and are not the equivalent of professional certificates.*

No other changes were made because of this comment.

- 14. Comment (#16):** Commenter feels the grade spans should be reverted to K rather than PK. Commenter supports the Praxis deletion, the diversity course and the emergency certificate, but feels a teacher residency should be added.

Response: *The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6.*

- 15. Comment (#17):** Commenter questions the requirement for the 093 to have two recommendations. Is that for the first renewal or all renewals?

Response: *It is only for initial certification. No change was made because of this comment.*

- 16. Comment (#18):** Commenter feels The adapted physical education endorsement **should** be updated and **remain** as part of Chapter 115 just as the Committee has proposed for the endorsements 2.2, similar to “teacher of students with visual and hearing impairments”,

2.4 endorsement gifted/talented and **All** other teachers who require a certificate or endorsement or license to teach in Maine schools. Commenter is opposed to the health and physical education credential. There is insufficient information on what makes up the credential. Is this a Maine only credential? Secondly, does this credential meet the goal of Chapter 115, Part 1, that states: “Standards and procedures for credentials are included to provide the highest quality personnel to help students meet the standards of the system of Learning Result”? Does completing half the content knowledge and skills in health education or physical education provide the preservice teacher enough content to teach 180+ days a year? What will the preservice teacher know and be able to do? What physical education content will this preservice teacher have? Will the preservice teacher still be required to take the science courses: biology and anatomy and physiology? Which of the 24 physical education credits will the preservice teacher be required to take? Will the health educator have the confidence to teach physical education content if his or her preference is health education? The commenter raised similar questions about health education.

Response: *The Board recognizes the value of adding the requirement to complete an Adapted Physical Education course for all holders of the School Health and Physical Education endorsement. The Board also recognizes the expertise provided by holders of this endorsement and therefore will reinstate the adapted physical education endorsement.*

- 17. Comment (#19, 20):** Commenter supports maintaining adapted physical education. Instruction in Physical Education is a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; most recently updated in 2004. Physical education is a direct service, meaning that it is a part of a student’s educational content. It is not a related service such as physical therapy and occupational therapy; services that assist a student in accessing their educational instruction. Physical education IS their education, just as math and literacy are, and may not be replaced by physical or occupational therapy. Adapted physical education services are necessary and required within the Individual Education Program when a student cannot make adequate progress in the general education setting due to one or more of several qualifying disabilities.

Response: *The Board recognizes the value of adding the requirement to complete an Adapted Physical Education course for all holders of the School Health and Physical Education endorsement. The Board also recognizes the expertise provided by holders of this endorsement and therefore will reinstate the adaptive physical education endorsement.*

- 18. Comment (#23):** Commenter has a few concerns to the endorsement 020 for elementary teacher: a) proposed change of 2 (c) Completed a minimum of nine semester hours in elementary literacy methods (e.g., teaching reading, teaching writing, children’s literature, writing process, foundations of literacy, multicultural literacy). This adds a three semester hour requirement in elementary literacy methods to the six semester hours already required. B) ((g) Completed a minimum of three semester hours in diversity-centered content related to today’s classroom (e.g., culturally responsive teaching,

multicultural education, intercultural education, second language acquisition or world language teaching methods). By adding two new course requirements, preservice teachers will take 2 fewer courses that could improve their content backgrounds. Such a requirement will make it less likely that a prospective teacher will take an extra course in science or math since those two new courses will cost them money.

***Response:** The addition of 3 credits in literacy helps to ensure a strong foundation in literacy instruction without reducing any of the other requirements. The addition of 3 credits in diversity-centered content related to today's classroom introduces different cultures, ideas, and philosophies also without reducing any of the other requirements. No change was made because of this comment.*

19. **Comment (#24):** Commenter had applied for a certification and was denied and raised the following question about the proposed revisions to Chapter 115 and if that would make a difference to his eligibility. "I read the revisions to Chapter 115, specifically, the 035 certificate for Assistant Special Education Supervisor. I was recently denied because my Bachelor's degree is not considered 'supportive services' such as a Bachelor's degree in social work. I have a BS and an MS in Psychology and am licensed through the State of Maine and have treated special education students for 17 years, the last three supervising teachers, IEP meetings, treatment plan meetings and for the last six I am a social worker at Sumner Memorial High School. Yet my bachelor's is not considered as supportive. Under the revisions would I be considered 'supportive services'?"

***Response:** Related services are defined in Rule Chapter 101 and the change in Chapter 115 aligns with this definition. No change was made because of this comment.*

20. **Comment (#25):** Commenter raised several considerations:

1. Certificate for Certified Educational Technician Section: Educational Technician III Eligibility 5 (B) and (C) requiring an individual to document 2 years of paid applied employment within the field of assignment for ED Tech II and 3 years for paid applied employment within the field creates challenges and limitations for hiring. The hiring pool of effective ed techs is thin and to add another requirement for career and tech positions will most likely decrease the already thin pool. Some programs may designate and hire an ed tech for specific programs but other schools hire an ed tech to provide academic remediation and technical skills to those students in need regardless of the specific program in which the student participates. I have had success hiring ed techs that may not have had two years of applied employment in a specific trade and have supported our students to be successful. Their positive attitude, willingness to learn and partner with our instructors and are proficient in reading and math skills have resulted in positive results for our students.

2. Part II Teacher and Educational Specialists: CTE Certificates and Endorsements, Secondary Career and Technical Education

B. Eligibility: (1) Requirements for all Pathways:

D. I would recommend adding language at the end of the last sentence following the semi-colon: or have the equivalent hours evidenced by a transcript.

F. I support the theory of diversity-centered education. The concern is that a teacher coming out of the field and into education has three years to take the required courses and adding one more in the same period will be one more contributor for an individual to not pursue CTE teaching. Could the Committee consider extending the timeline to 4 years rather than three or show proof of training offered by their Center or region offered as part of their professional development in-service program?

Perhaps the language is buried somewhere in the document, but it is not clear to me that there is consideration of the following: A professionally certified teacher that wants to teach in a CTE school has to take all 5 courses just as someone without any teaching experience. For example, a business teacher professionally certified comes to CTE; when they submit for CTE certification, they are given a conditional and required to take safety and management and the CTE bootcamp class. Another example is a professional certificate 6-12 in science/math who could be an ideal candidate to teach career exploration courses but cannot get a CTE certification because he has been teaching for the past 10 years and does not meet the requirement of working in a designated field within the last 5 years. Individuals don't lose their knowledge or experience but their development evolves. This is just one example and is a potential barrier to recruit competent teachers in CTE. I would like to see a provision that a professionally certified teacher with local approval for the position be granted CTE certification.

3. I would also like to see that a certified Industrial Arts Certificates holder (700) could be endorsed also as a CTE certificate holder. We have few industrial arts programs left in our state and we have certified IA instructors that could contribute to teaching CTE and help to ease the shortage of CTE teachers. The trend to expose younger students to CTE, increase 9-10 grade CTE participation, individuals with an IA certificate can easily fill a need in CTE offering career exploration offerings, etc. We are challenged to recruit CTE teachers and I would suggest that by not moving existing IA certificate holders under the umbrella of CTE, we are losing the opportunity to offer quality programs for our youth.

Responses: *In response to your comments:*

- a. *Transcript analysis is implied in the language.*
- b. *Being prepared to teach a diverse student body is a priority of this proposed rule.*
- c. *The requirements of B.1.d and e may be fulfilled with previous teacher preparation or experience.*
- d. *This concept is being addressed by a CTE Taskforce.*

No change was made because of this comment.

21. Comment (#26): Commenter provides a personal situation that the individual feels shows the need for modification of the credentialing process “through which a CTE certification can be obtained in ME. I hope that through describing my situation, it may become clear that the certification process and/or requirements should be modified so as to remove the unreasonable hurdles faced by people in my situation - folks who are certified teachers, and are attempting to transition to CTE based on prior work experience

and background. In 2019 I was hired to teach a variety of introductory level pre-vocational classes by the Biddeford School Department.

I obtained my bachelor's degree in Life Sciences in 1992 from SUNY Buffalo, and a masters degree in wood science in 1998 from UMO. In 2008 I completed the Extended Teacher Education Program (ETEP) through USM and obtained my teaching certification.

I currently hold a certification to teach middle school science as well as a certification to teach 7-12 Life Sciences and taught middle school science for 6 years between 2011 and 2016 at the Biddeford Middle School. Prior to that I worked a variety of jobs that help to qualify me to teach the pre-voc classes: From 96 to 98 I worked in an engineered wood manufacturing facility in Georgia as a quality control technician. From 1998-2003 I worked as a CAD Operator/designer for Wood Structures in Biddeford. In late 2003 into 2004 I worked as a housebuilder, before getting my CNA certification and working for 3 years in healthcare. At that point I entered ETEP and became an educator. As a side job, from 2006 until now I owned and operated a recumbent bike shop, assembling recumbent bikes and trikes and providing them to customers.

Given these qualifications, my supervisor and colleagues agree that I am well qualified to teach the pre-voc classes that I have been hired to teach, but there really isn't an appropriate certification that applies. A CTE Drafting Certification might apply, however, after submitting my application, I received a letter from the state indicating that the 4000 hours job experience it requires must have been in the last 5 years, and I have been teaching for the last 10. It also requires a license or similar in the field, but I never obtained one as it was not needed for the job that I held at Wood Structures. Neither of those requirements are possible to fulfill, so I abandoned that route in favor of pursuing an Industrial Arts certification. I submitted my application and transcripts etc. to the DOE and received a letter from the state that none of my education or background were accepted towards an Industrial Arts certification, an assessment which I think is unreasonable, unfair and frankly incorrect in light of the background and experience described above.”

Response: *The requirements of B.1.d and e may be fulfilled with previous teacher preparation or experience. No change was made because of this comment.*

- 22. Comment (#27):** Commenter reflects that “While the MSTA is strongly in support of expanded and focused attention to diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion, MSTA opposes the proposed changes to Chapter 115 as written.

The proposed changes for Elementary Teacher endorsement (020) includes an increase of required semester hours in “literacy methods.” Currently, pre-service educators are required to complete 6 credit hours in reading methods and writing methods. The proposed change increases this requirement to 9 credit hours in “literacy methods” and additionally adds a 3 credit course in diversity, equity, and inclusion. While we believe that these could be valuable learning experiences for

pre-service teachers and are fully in support of expanded diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion pre-service teacher education, the MSTA board has articulated the following concerns:

- 1) There could be an unintended impact of reducing the number of credit hours available for a pre-service educator to take science content courses, further reducing the emphasis on science in K-8 teacher preparation.
- 2) The changes in Elementary Teacher endorsement 020 appear to convey a renewed hyperfocus on early literacy. As always, we value literacy and numeracy, yet we see science as a way of engaging students in learning these important skills in meaningful, relevant, and impactful ways. Science taps the natural curiosity and sense of wonder in young children. We see many alternative avenues to accomplishing the literacy/numeracy goals and that there could be an unintentional impact on science preparation along with classroom instruction time resulting from the proposed changes.
- 3) Finally, we would like to advocate for frequent science instruction in the elementary classroom. Currently, science receives surprisingly little instructional time across the state and the nation, especially in elementary school, a time when students are the most curious about the world around them. In a 2014 survey of Maine schools, 46% of PK-2 and 33% of grade 3-5 classrooms reported an allotment of 9 hours or less in science instruction per academic year. The National Survey of Science and Mathematics Education has been tracking this same information on a national scale and has found similar data. The minimal time spent on teaching science continues to significantly decrease, citing a 33% decrease in early childhood science education time from 2000 to 2018.”

Response: *In response to your comments:*

- a. *There is no reduction in semester hours required.*
- b. *Literacy skills are fundamental to all learning in all other content areas.*
- c. *The amount of instructional time for science instruction in the elementary classroom is a decision made at the local level. It is not included in Chapter 115.*

No change was made because of this comment.

23. Comment (#28): Commenter indicated “Section 1: Teacher and Educational Specialists General Certificates and Endorsement We appreciate the flexibility added in Part 11 around the Praxis exam and support the fact it is no longer required. It can be an option along with a 3.0 grade average in all courses required for certification, or a successful portfolio review.

We support the inclusion of diversity training as a requirement in all the pathways. We have a question on the genesis in the various teacher pathways and the requirement of a minimum of three semester hours in human development, educational psychology, developmental psychology, adolescent psychology or child development.

The inclusion of “pre-kindergarten” to several endorsements in this section i.e. pre-kindergarten to Grade 12, makes sense with the growing number of pre-kindergarten

programs in the state. The teacher endorsement for pre-K through 12 is particularly important in some of our smaller districts, where a teacher may have to fill in for vacancies.

We applaud the inclusion of American Sign Language, Hebrew and Arabic to the list of word languages for Middle Level and World Language teachers in endorsement 1.3 and 1.7. It recognizes the diversity of our students as well as the diversity of our state and country. It also opens up opportunities to our students who choose to live or work in areas where those languages are used.

Section 4: Administrators Certificates We appreciate the same language for out-of-state licensure applies to administrators, as is does for teachers or specialists from another state i.e. administrators, teachers or specialists with out-of-state licensure may qualify for a professional certificate in Maine. This gives our School Boards flexibility when considering candidates. Out-of-state administrators appropriately have to take an approved course in Special Education law and civil rights law in Maine and follow the same renewal requirements as Maine-issued certificates.

The change in name from ISLEC TO PSEL i.e. Professional Standards for Educational Leaders versus Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium is appropriate. According to the PSEL website, this is just a name change i.e. ISLEC is now PSEL.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

24. Comment (#29): Commenter provided three areas of support: “First, I fully support of the addition of a diversity course to certification requirements. It is something we have required in our programs at USM for many years. Maine will have a much better prepared educator workforce when we enact this requirement for all disciplines and grade spans in all educator preparation programs.

Second, I fully support the addition of 3 credits in literacy coursework for elementary teachers for a total of 9 credits. My suggestion is that the courses be specifically defined, at the very least requiring a reading methods course of all elementary teacher candidates. Though literacy coursework is not proposed for secondary candidates in this revision of Ch. 115, we require 6 credits of our secondary teachers at USM because the evidence is strong that secondary teachers need preparation to work with students across content areas on disciplinary literacy skills, and they are not always equipped to do so unless this is an area of focus in their educator preparation program. I suggest this be considered now or in future revisions of Ch. 115 to provide our students with the best opportunities to be successful in their middle and high school coursework, as well as college and career ready.

Third, I fully support Praxis being removed as a certification requirement for teachers and education specialists, such as the literacy specialists and school counselors we prepare at USM. This exam should not be allowed to continue as a barrier for entry into any of our

education professions. I appreciate that the exam is not referenced for Education Specialists in the proposed Ch. 115 revisions.”

Response: No change was made because of this comment.

- 25. Comment (#30):** Commenter raises concerns about grade spans. “Grade Spans: UMS educator preparation programs appreciate the attraction to some school administrators and teachers of establishing wider certification bands, as proposed by this rule. However, there was unanimous agreement among UMS educator preparation program leaders and faculty that the grade spans proposed by this rule are far too expansive. They would especially do a disservice to our youngest and most vulnerable learners as they are inconsistent with child development and evidence-based practice for effective, engaging teaching and learning. Similarly, the content expectations are inadequate minimum preparation for the middle-level curriculum.

The automatic inclusion of Pre-K in any span that currently includes kindergarten is especially problematic given the developmentally appropriate practice and teacher preparation required to serve the unique needs of four-year-old learners (despite the direction of IDEA as it pertains to Special Education endorsement). Furthermore, there are no early childhood methods in the list of required courses for elementary certification, and aspiring educators preparing to teach under that certification work with the Maine Learning Results (K-12) and not the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards, which are designed to improve practice and programs for children ages 3 to kindergarten. Similarly, the Birth-5 focus of the 282 endorsement (Teacher of Children with Disabilities) does not require any courses focused on early intervention and content specific to young children (birth to age 5) and their families, and should be given the critical foundation these early services and supports provide for later success. Meanwhile, middle school education (grades 6-8) is a separate discipline with its own extensive body of research that informs developmentally responsive practice and teacher education.

We acknowledge there is no perfect solution that balances the narrower grade spans supported by research and the wider ones sought by some schools in search of greater flexibility. That said, we support previous recommendations to the State Board and the Legislature for the following certification grade spans: PreK-3, K-6, 5-8, and 6-12. To minimize impact on the current workforce, the current K-8 credential could be retained in statute for renewals only, thus allowing existing endorsement holders to maintain the certification as long as it does not lapse. We urge closer review of the vast body of research, including that undertaken here in Maine by MEPRI and in other states, like the 2018 study prepared for the Pennsylvania Department of Education by the Learning Policy Institute, in finalizing grade spans and would ask the State Board and the Department include UMS teacher preparation program faculty in further conversation before finalizing this important rule.”

Response: The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6.

26. Comment (#30): Commenter raises concerns about Pathway II. “Pathway II: Content knowledge is a cornerstone of an effective educator and we fully support the State Board’s intent, consistent with P.L. 2021, Chapter 228 (LD 1189), to provide other opportunities to demonstrate content knowledge and key teaching skills beyond the core Praxis exam. We applaud this long-overdue change. That said, we make the following recommendations to strengthen the proposed new options by which teaching ability could be assessed through Pathway II:

Instead of the basic skills test that measures reading, writing, and math (Praxis I), rely on Praxis II or another validated, reliable measure that assesses content-area knowledge appropriate to the endorsement.

Better define in the rule the expectations of a “successful portfolio,” including the evaluation processes that will prevent unintentional bias and allow educators to authentically demonstrate their ability to teach effectively within the endorsement being sought. Since this option is intended to offer an alternative content knowledge assessment, it should prioritize measurement of those skills.

Additionally, UMS seeks the inclusion of language in the rule (or in the legislation that will ultimately lead to its enactment) that is explicit in stating that State-approved programs (Pathway I) are not required to automatically update their course sequences when the revised rule ultimately goes into effect to include the courses being added into Pathway II, rather that these courses may be considered as part of future program re-approval.

As a technicality, we believe all approved programs now incorporate an approved exceptionality course and thus the inclusion of Item C in the list of Pathway I requirements (“Completed an approved course for teaching students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom”) is redundant and can be eliminated for clarity.”

Response: *In response to your comments:*

- a. *P.L. 2021, Chapter 228 established the requirements.*
- b. *Regarding updating courses, this could be addressed in Chapter 114.*
- c. *This requirement ensures that the State is meeting expectations established by the US Department of Education for certifications in Maine.*

No change was made because of this comment.

27. Comment (#30): Commenter had comments on other changes in Part II. “Other changes: There are a number of changes UMS teacher preparation programs wholeheartedly support. These include:

- The creation of a new endorsement that includes both Health and Physical Education, and limits the student teaching requirement to just one semester if it includes experiences in both settings. This common-sense combination endorsement recognizes the practical reality that many educators, especially in smaller schools and SAUs, are called upon to

teach both Health and PE while not compromising professional preparation. In 2020, UMF and UMPI announced a new partnership through which UMPI faculty will provide online coursework in PE to UMF students and UMF will deliver online School Health coursework to UMPI students, allowing graduates of both programs to effectively teach – and earn dual certification. This is but one example of the innovation of UMS universities in meeting the evolving needs of Maine schools.

- The addition of American Sign Language, Hebrew, and Arabic to the World Language endorsement group, and the flexibility incorporated for more easily adding new languages in the future in response to Maine’s changing student demographics.

Finally, UMS wants to make clear that the input above reflects areas where the leaders of all of our educator preparation programs were in full agreement and felt it imperative to weigh-in with one collective, clear voice. However, one area where we did not reach consensus was on the changes in Pathway II related to the removal of some required courses in exchange for nine credits of literacy from a menu of options. From a practical perspective, flexibility is beneficial for institutions of higher education and aspiring educators. From a preparation perspective, we know the fundamental importance of foundational coursework in reading and writing methods, as well as literacy and language development to effectively teach beginning readers. The State Board will receive more detailed consideration about this from one of our university colleagues.”

***Response:** No change was made because of this comment.*

28. **Comment (#31):** Commenter acknowledges the work done on the 093 credential. The Committee wishes to highlight the following commendable aspects of the proposed Chapter 115, Part II requirements for the 093 School Psychologist certificate:

Section 2.5.A. The Committee appreciates the continued alignment of the definition of the role of school psychologists with the practice standards established by the National Association of School Psychologists. These practice standards emphasize the role of school psychologists in facilitating collaborative, data-based problem-solving to promote equitable school-based services that support academic progress and mental and behavioral health for all students.

Section 2.5.B. The Committee welcomes the additional requirement for certificate holders to complete 3 semester hours in diversity-centered content, as School Psychologists are ethically obligated to provide culturally-responsive services to support equitable outcomes for diverse students.

Section 2.5.B.2. The Committee supports the recognition of school psychology programs approved by the Maine Department of Education as meeting the requirements for an initial 093 School Psychologist certificate. Graduates of the department-approved school psychology program in Maine currently are required to submit to a transcript review process by the certification office before being recommended for certification. The recognition of department-approved programs within the rules would eliminate this

additional step and support in-state recruitment of qualified professionals into the profession.

a. Note: We recommend addressing the typo in this section by changing *unitveristy* to *university*.

Section 2.5.B.3. The Committee recognizes the importance of clarifying that professionals with a valid license from the Maine Board of Examiners of Psychologists must have demonstrated competency in school psychology to obtain the 093 School Psychologist Certificate, as this revision brings the rules in alignment with statute.

Section 2.5.B.4. The committee supports the revision to Pathway 4 requirements for credentialing, as it brings Maine’s credentialing requirements in alignment with national standards for training in school psychology. We believe that these changes will address the primary barriers that have prevented qualified School Psychologists from other jurisdictions from obtaining credentialing in Maine.

Section 2.5.C.1. The committee appreciates the clarification on expectations for the first-year individual supervision of School Psychologists. This clarity will help newly certified School Psychologists plan a quality first-year supervision experience with confidence that the arrangement will meet requirements for transitioning to a 3-year certificate.

Section 2.5.C.2. The committee appreciates the additional option for renewal of the 093 School Psychologist certificate through continuing education. The current requirement to obtain a national certification or state licensure in order to renew the 093 School Psychologist certificate places an unnecessary financial burden on School Psychologists, and maintaining competency through professional development should be the priority consideration for renewal.

The one concern that the Committee would like to bring to the attention of the Maine Department of Education pertains to the conflicting language about the terms and renewal requirements for the 093 School Psychologist certificate in Chapter 115, Parts I and II. We believe that the terms of issuance and renewal requirements in Chapter 115, Part II are appropriate and necessary for ensuring the provision of high quality school psychology services in Maine. Therefore, we recommend modifying the language in Part I to clarify that the 093 School Psychologist certificate will be issued for a 3-year term and will require evidence of 75 hours of continuing professional development every 3 years for renewal.

Response: *In response to your comments:*

- a. *The typo in 2.5.B.2 will be corrected.*
- b. *Language will be added to Part I, Section 6.4 to allow for a three-year renewal period for this certificate.*

29. Comment (#32): Commenter provides the following support of the 093: “We believe that the proposed Chapter 115 rules will mitigate shortages by supporting the recruitment

of highly qualified school psychologists in Maine. The proposed rules reflect national standards for the training of school psychologists and therefore protect students' right to access effective and equitable school psychology services. Furthermore, the proposed rules remove significant barriers to credentialing by completers of Maine's only graduate program in school psychology. We particularly appreciate that the proposed rules (a) recognize completion of a school psychology program approved by the Maine Department of Education as a pathway to eligibility for the 093 School Psychologist certificate (Section 2.5.B.2) and (b) permit renewal of the 093 School Psychologist certificate based on evidence of continuing education (Section 2.5.C.2.c). These changes will support recruitment of diverse and highly qualified individuals into the profession by giving them increased confidence that time invested in an 84+ credit graduate program will lead to a renewable professional certification."

Response: No change was made because of this comment.

- 30. Comment (#33):** Commenter provided the following: "For teachers with a 282 conditional, this requirement is included: "(c) In the first year of employment, be enrolled in a Maine approved program for mentoring teachers under a Conditional Certificate for a special education endorsement. However, this is not included in the 286/291/292 conditional requirements section. Chapter 180 states that mentoring is required for conditionally certified special education teachers. Mentoring is essential for all new teachers and especially for special education teachers I have experienced first hand the challenges of having multiple pools of applicants who hold the current.

Response: This will be clarified by adding the requirement to Section 2.2.

- 31. Comment (#34):** Commenter suggests " I have experienced first hand the challenges of having multiple pools of applicants who hold the current K-12 660 endorsement, have experience with English language learners, and experience teaching at the upper elementary, middle or high school level, but who are not at all prepared to enter PreK classrooms in which the typical mode of teaching is thematic based play and in which working with the team of teachers to ensure access to Tier 1 curriculum is a critical equity enabler. Furthermore, K-12 ELL teachers are typically unaware of the WIDA standards for 4 year olds. I urge the decision makers to update the Maine DOE 660 endorsement so that it is inclusive of PreK and coursework that enables all ESOL teachers to understand the foundations that the PreK year builds, especially for young dual language learners.

Response: No change was made because of this comment.

- 32. Comment (#35):** Commenter reflects, "The members of the Special Education Department support the overall proposed revisions. Here a few particular comments.
1. B.1(c) We strongly support the requirement of the Exceptionality course for candidates seeking 282 certification. We understand the rationale of the Exceptionality course being designed for general educators. However, we require this course in our 282 certification program and have found the course provides important foundational knowledge for people seeking certification as special education teachers.
 2. B.2(b) We strongly support the designation of important content to be met through the 24 semester hours in special education. We strongly recommend that the area of

special education law and implementation be moved from the optional list to the required list, making four required courses. Special education law and implementation would include the regulations for special education services and Individualized Education Programs (IEP) which are fundamental to the education of children with disabilities. We also recommend adding assistive technology to the optional list.

3. B.2(e): It is our understanding that recent state law removed the requirement of basic skills testing in reading, writing, and mathematics for teacher certification. We agree with the state law removing that requirement and strongly oppose a requirement for basic skills testing in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

33. Comment (#37): Commenter provided the following supportive comments:

“In the proposed changes to 115, we were particularly glad to see the approval of professional certificate reciprocity. We hope that the allowance for “other countries deemed comparable” would extend certification to some of our immigrant staff members who have taught previously in other countries. We are thrilled to see that a high GPA or a portfolio could substitute for taking the PRAXIS. This is an equity move that will remove a hurdle that often delays people on their paths to certification. The addition of social sciences as an approved subject area will allow educators with backgrounds in these areas to receive credit toward their certification coursework, something that will shorten their journey to full credentialing. This will be very beneficial to our educators working to complete many courses. Adding language immersion teacher as a teaching assignment will prevent our international teachers in our Spanish-English dual language program from being flagged as in violation of certification. The waiver of six credits of coursework for those who demonstrate having taught at the university or college level will smooth the path for our highly educated and experienced immigrant educators who previously taught at this level in other countries. Finally, including a requirement for candidates to take a diversity-oriented course will ensure that educators enter our schools more equipped to teach the diverse students who are in our schools.”

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

34. Comment (#38): Commenter suggests, “As you update certification requirements, please consider adding a Language Acquisition & Instruction course (perhaps one of the courses required of the ESOL 660 Endorsement) to all certification requirements.”

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

35. Comment (#40): Commenter states “The Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance would like to be on record that we are opposed to the removal of the APE endorsement for Physical Education teachers that is being proposed by the Higher Education and Certification Committee.”

Response: *The Board recognizes the value of adding the requirement to complete an Adaptive Physical Education course for all holders of the School Health and Physical Education endorsement. The Board also recognizes the expertise provided by holders of this endorsement and therefore will reinstate the adaptive physical education endorsement.*

36. Comment (#40): Commenter states “The Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance would like to be on record that we have reservations in regards to the proposed dual certification for Health Education and Physical Education for K-12, that is being proposed by the Higher Education and Certification Committee. · We would recommend that this be a Health Education and Physical Education Certificate, not School Health and Physical Education certificate. · We have a concern that the college graduate will not have enough knowledge and understanding of the Health Education and the Physical Education National Standards with only 12 hours of Health Education classes and 12 hours of Physical Education classes. · We have a concern about the impact of the college graduate having only 15 weeks of student teaching that will be divided between Health Education and Physical Education. It is unclear how student teaching will be divided. MAHPERD promotes and wants to be assured that Maine students will continue to receive quality health education and physical education as part of their K-12 education and that both are being taught by certified, quality teachers.”

Response: The Board recognizes the value of adding the requirement to complete an Adaptive Physical Education course for all holders of the School Health and Physical Education endorsement. The Board also recognizes the expertise provided by holders of this endorsement and therefore will reinstate the adaptive physical education endorsement.

37. Comment (#41): Commenter is “writing to ask that the Praxis exam requirement for the Literacy Specialist certificate be waived. When Governor Mills signed LD 1189, Praxis was removed from Maine Certification rules. Currently, Maine DOE is still requiring the Praxis for Literacy Specialists.”

Response: 1189 removed the requirement of Praxis for “teachers”, and replaced it with the three options. Literacy Specialists are Ed Specialists in Chapter 115, and therefore the removal of the requirement to take Praxis cannot happen until the new version of the rule becomes effective. No change was made because of this comment.

38. Comment (#41): Commenter is focused on the need for more qualified educators for teaching health education. Commenter is concerned that elementary teachers are expected to teach health education with no preparation or understanding of the health standards. Secondly the commenter questions “the new recommendation for a dual certification for School Health and Physical Education. Is this eliminating the health and physical education and replacing it with a dual?”

Response: All three (health, physical education, and school health and physical education) would exist. No change was made because of this comment.

39. Comment (#43): Commenter provides thoughts on Praxis and grade spans:

Topic #1: Content Knowledge assessment (Praxis testing)

The MEPRI report on credentialing systems (2017) recommended that licensure requirements provide “expanded options for licensure examinations in order to address

teacher shortage areas and diversify the teacher workforce to be more reflective of the communities in which they teach.” Conceptually, allowing flexibility for candidates to document basic skills competency in other ways is a valid approach.

However, the alternative measures that have been added in the proposed rule are not focused solely on measuring content knowledge. The use of GPA in all required courses will also capture pedagogy course grades and thus dilute the ability to capture content knowledge. The portfolios that are being proposed as an alternative to standardized tests have not been described in enough detail to assess what they will measure. Given that content knowledge is a cornerstone of teacher preparation, we recommend focusing the GPA alternative to the cumulative GPA earned only in the 24 credits of relevant subject matter courses required for the endorsement. A portfolio requirement is likely not feasible for measuring content knowledge within the existing time constraints of the Certification Department staff. However, a ready alternative may exist within the Prior Learning Assessment processes offered at many of our state’s academic institutions, which result in earned credit on a transcript that can be more readily captured and evaluated by the certification staff.

Topic #2: Elementary Grade Spans

The proposed rules would expand the general elementary (020) endorsement from grades K-8 to grades preK-8, and expand the early elementary (029) endorsement from grades K-3 to grades preK-3.

Alignment to Evidence – Grades 7 and 8

The evidence from our research on credentialing systems (2017) suggests that we need to “recruit and select candidates to teaching who have strong content knowledge backgrounds in the subject areas they will teach.” Content expertise is particularly important in secondary grades where the curriculum becomes more advanced. The Elementary (020) endorsement only requires six credits in each core content area (ELA, math, science, and social science), which we deem to be inadequate minimum content preparation for core subject teachers in grades 7 and 8. MEPRI has recommended through several prior reports that grade 7 and 8 teachers be treated as secondary teachers, and that the 020 grade span be narrowed to end at grade 6 as is standard practice in most states. This would increase the minimum content area requirements of grades 7 and 8 teachers to 18 credits (for a middle level endorsement covering grades 4 to 8) or 24 credits (for a secondary certificate covering grades 7 to 12).

The biggest barrier to this change appears to stem from concerns about teacher supply.

These concerns are justified. Analysis of the certification patterns of Maine’s grade 7 and 8 core content teachers (MEPRI, 2021) revealed that 62% of math teachers, 45% of science teachers, 48% of English teachers, and 40% of social studies teachers held an Elementary (020) endorsement as their qualifying certification.

Based on this analysis, MEPRI recommends that the Elementary credential be narrowed to end at grade 6, but that the change be applicable only to new certificates

issued after a given date. The current 020 certificate can be retained for certificate renewals only, so that currently certified teachers can remain eligible for employment in grades 7 and 8.

Alignment to Evidence – Grade pre-K

The proposed revisions to rule chapter 115 expand the lower end of the elementary (020) endorsement from grade K to grade pre-K. In keeping with our prior recommendation, we do not believe that it is feasible to provide adequate preparation for grades PreK through 8 in the same credential. If the elementary (020) certificate remains intact with the full grade span through grade 8, it is not likely that the coursework related to child development and teaching methods would be adequate for these young learners. A change to grades PreK through 8 is not recommended.

However, we cannot speak to the evidence behind implementing an elementary certificate that spans grades K-6 (our prior recommendation) compared to pre-K to 6. The content knowledge expectations for grade pre-K would be well met by the expectations in place for grades K-6, but we have not formed an opinion on whether the pedagogical and clinical requirements for the 020 endorsement are appropriate for grade PreK.

In analyzing the certification patterns of pre-K and K teachers (MEPRI, 2021), we found that most of our current pre-K teachers—69%—hold an early childhood (age birth to 5) credential but not a K-8 certificate. On the flip side, a large majority (75%) of kindergarten teachers hold a K-8 endorsement but not an early childhood endorsement. Given the similarities between the learners in PreK and those in Kindergarten, it makes sense for a well-trained workforce to be able to serve both of those grades. Additional expertise and/or study would be needed to determine whether this could best be accomplished by expanding the birth-5 certificate to include Kindergarten, to expand the K-3 certificate to include PreK, and/or expanding a new elementary endorsement from K-6 to pK-6.

Response: *In response to your comments:*

- a. *P.L. 2021, Chapter 228 established the requirements. No change was made because of this comment.*
 - b. *The 020 Elementary Teacher endorsement will be changed to include kindergarten through grade 6.*
- No other changes were made because of this comment.*

Consideration of Substantial Changes

The Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Education reviewed the 43 public comments received on the proposed amendments to Chapter 115. In response to the comments, the State Board of Education proposed three substantial changes to the rule. Substantial changes require that the State Board provide an additional 30 days of public comment.

The three substantial changes are as follows:

- Refined some of the grade spans:
 - Endorsement 020: Elementary Teacher will be K-6 instead of PK-8;
 - Endorsement: Secondary Teacher will be grades 6-12 instead of 7-12;
 - The following endorsements will be expanded to include Pre-K:
 - Kindergarten through Grade 12 Teacher (All Subjects Other than Art and Music)
 - Kindergarten through Grade 12 Teacher (Music and Art)
 - World Language Teacher
 - 660: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Teacher
 - Certificate 071: Library Media Specialist
 - Certificate 075: School Counselor
 - Certificate 524: School Nurse
 - Endorsement: Native Language
 - Endorsement 282: Teacher of Children with Disabilities
 - Endorsement: Kindergarten through Grade 12 Teacher
 - Endorsement 515: Adapted Physical Education Teacher
 - Endorsement 690: Gifted/Talented Teacher
 - Certificate 057: Teaching Principal;
 - Endorsement 081: Early Childhood Teacher will be birth through K instead of birth to school age 5; and
 - Endorsement: Secondary Career and Technical Education Teacher and
 - Endorsement 860: Cooperative Education Coordinator will both be grades 6-12 instead of grades 9-12
- Reinstated the Adapted Physical Education (APE) endorsement
- Revised language per P.L. 2021, Chapter 348, which requires that rules which used the term ‘hearing impaired’ be changed to ‘hard of hearing’

Comments and Responses:

The deadline for submission of written comments was November 29, 2021. Twenty-one sets of written comments were submitted by that date. Written comments were received from the following:

1. Tim Pearson, Dedham School
2. Deborah Drew, Professor, Husson University
3. Julie Gardner, Presque Isle High School, Math Teacher and Certification Committee Chair
4. Tracy Peck-Moad, Brunswick School Department
5. Valerie Smith, Bucksport, Maine
6. Heather Geoghan, MSAD 51
7. Becky Belmore, NBCT, PE Teacher, Greely Middle School, MSAD 51
8. Nancy Cronin, On behalf of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
9. Carrie Woodcock, Executive Director, Maine Parent Federation
10. Tonya Arnold, Superintendent, RSU 2
11. Karyn Bussell, Madison Area High School
12. Marnie Morneault, CCIDS, Orono
13. Allison West, parent
14. Penny Bishop, Dean, College of Education and Human Development, Univ. Of Maine; Katie Rybakova, Executive Dir, Maine Association of Middle Level Education; Gert Nesin, President of Maine Association of Middle Level Education
15. Rose Angell
16. Emily Ellis, MSAD 17
17. Robert Placido, on behalf of the six teacher prep programs of the University System
18. Matthew Plaisted, SAD 49, Elementary APE teacher
19. Heather Marden, Maine Association for the Education of Young Children
20. Suzana Dillon, Texas Women's University
21. Shannon Fotter, Member of Adapted PE Task Force

Part II Requirements for Specific Certificates and Endorsements

1. Comment (#1, 16, 18, 21): Commenters appreciate the reinstatement of the Adaptive Physical Education Endorsement! It is heartening to know that our voices were heard and that special needs students all over Maine will have qualified, dedicated professionals that are specifically trained to meet their needs!

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

2. Comment (#2): Commenter was looking at the further revised proposed changes to CH 115 School Counseling. Commenter noticed that this part remains: "Coursework in **bachelor's**, master's, or doctorate degree program must align with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards and address content areas for School Counselors. School counseling training is at the postgraduate level, not the bachelor's level. Bachelor's level coursework does not apply."

Response: *This is a targeted comment period to address three substantial changes that were made as the result of the review of the original comments. No change was made because of this comment.*

3. Comment (#3): Commenter has some concerns about changing the span of endorsements. They are as follows:

- “Many districts are having difficulty filling positions with qualified people as it is, particularly as the number of retiring educators continues to increase. Limiting the grade spans in which someone may teach will exacerbate this issue.
- Schools throughout the state have multiple grades in schools. As the number of students per grade rises and falls, teachers are often asked to move from one grade to another. If someone has an 020 endorsement teaching grade 6 and is asked to switch grades because of numbers, potentially, they could lose their job (for example, if they were asked to move to grade 8 they would no longer have the correct endorsement).
- Small schools often have teachers teaching using more than one endorsement, either because of grade span or content area. These changes would create an even bigger issue in hiring people with the correct endorsement area.
- There is already inconsistency in how certifications are processed at the DoE. I've had a few situations where a colleague gets a letter stating what is necessary for professional certification, and when the documents are uploaded showing the meeting of those, they get another letter stating they still don't qualify for one. When I've emailed the department, I get back that the person has to call. Many times they don't know the right language to use to explain, so I've sat with them to call. When I explain the situation, the person on the phone has authorized the professional certificate. Adding more layers of expectations will only increase the processing time, rather than shortening it.”

Response: *With respect to your concerns:*

- a. The Board endeavors to improve the rule by balancing the expectations for well-qualified individuals with the desire to fill positions.*
- b. Teachers currently holding a 020 certificate will renew as K-8 as long as their certificate never lapses.*
- c. Emergency certificates or waivers are available.*
- d. This targeted comment period is for rule Chapter 115, which does not include the certification process.*

No change was made because of this comment.

4. Comment (#4): Commenter indicates that she is “a Physical Education Teacher here in Maine with a current APE endorsement. I teach kindergarten through second grade PE at Kate Furbish Elementary School which has 618 students from age 5-7 years. My gym is a place where everyone is welcome and without my APE knowledge I'm sure that it would not be a meaningful experience for all. These young students are our most vulnerable and often challenging students. It is essential that they begin to learn the lifelong skills of being physically literate but at their own level. If they cannot be successful in general education physical education it is up to me to see that they have an opportunity to get these skills another way. This requires additional training in many areas of social emotional learning, physical disabilities, mental health, childhood development, special education law and the ability to work with all of their additional service providers. I believe only well trained APE specialists should be providing these services.

Those specialists should also be recognized for what additional training they have to obtain the APE endorsement.

The increased need for APE is obvious in the sheer volume of need we are seeing for specialty services in special education. We now have 4 full contained classrooms at our schools as needs have changed.

I have had the privilege of working with children of all abilities and done my share of duct taping hockey sticks to wheel chairs, using balls with bells to teach a blind child to catch, using velcro gloves and balls for children with CP. I could go on and on. The bottom line is that each time I do this I move that child closer to lifelong physical activity and a chance to engage with the general ed PE classroom. I love this part of my job and hope that the state will see the need for the endorsement and the skills attached to it.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

5. Comment (#5): Commenter has a clarification and two concerns about special education credentials

1. “To clarify: In the 282 conditional pathway for Ed Tech III candidates, is it the Department’s intent to exclude any requirement for special ed coursework prior to issuance of a conditional certificate? Is the assumption that the minimum of 3 years of experience and positive evaluation from an administrator replaces a requirement for formal coursework?”
2. I am puzzled that there is no similar conditional pathway for Ed Tech III candidates in the low-incidence disability categories (286, 291, and 292). These positions are particularly difficult to fill. I only mention this in case it truly is an oversight, rather than a deliberate choice.
3. I continue to be puzzled and concerned about the intent of the language in the Low Incidence Conditional Certificate requirements.

Here is how it reads at present:

Conditional Certificate for this Endorsement

1. (a) *Earned at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, in accordance with Part I Section 4.4Part I Section 6.1 of this rule; and*
2. (b) *Completed a minimum of 24 semester hours in the areas relevant to the endorsement being sought; and ...*

Here are the Conditional certificate requirements for a 282 endorsement:

3.3. Conditional Certificate for this Endorsement

- (a) *Earned at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, in accordance with Part I Section 4.4Part I Section 6.1 of this rule; and*
- (b) *Completed a minimum of nine semester hours in special education, and...*

As written, I understand this to mean that

- the Department intends for those applying for a 282 endorsement to have **9 semester hours** of SED coursework prior to issuance of a conditional 282 certificate, and

- the Department intends for those applying for a 286 endorsement to have **24 semester hours** of coursework PRIOR to issuance of a conditional 286 endorsement.

Does the Department intend to issue a conditional 286 endorsement only those who already have a professional 282 endorsement?

Response: This is a targeted comment period to address three substantial changes that were made as the result of the review of the original comments. No change was made because of this comment.

6. Comment (#6, #7): Commenters thanked the State Board Chair of the Certification Committee for requesting the reinstatement of this endorsement. It proves that, as a Board, you value this educational content for all students regardless of ability and that you recognize the need for highly qualified professionals in the delivery of physical education instruction.

Instruction in Physical Education is a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; most recently updated in 2004. Physical education is a direct service, meaning that it is a part of a student's educational content. It is not a related service such as physical therapy and occupational therapy; services that assist a student in accessing their educational instruction. Physical education IS their education, just as math and literacy are, and may not be replaced by physical or occupational therapy.

Adapted physical education services are necessary and required within the Individual Education Program when a student cannot make adequate progress in the general education setting due to one or more of several qualifying disabilities. Appropriate assessment, qualification standards, and program implementation within the least restrictive environment are requirements under the special education process.

As in any other content area, special education services must be directed by a qualified individual. The 515-Adapted Physical Education endorsement ensures the qualifications of appropriately prepared educators. It was my experience, as well as that of my physical education colleagues, that our undergraduate teacher preparation programs leading to the 510-Physical Education teacher certification did not include the coursework in the special education process including assessment, report writing, and program development and implementation. Nor did it include a practical experience or student teaching assignment as is required under the current 515 criteria. Without qualified adapted physical education teachers, these responsibilities fall on general education PE teachers. Oftentimes, severely disabled students are left "on the sideline" or waived from instruction all together simply because the professional does not feel comfortable or prepared to educate such special needs students. According to IDEA (2004), Free and Appropriate Public Education includes physical education and is the right of every student, regardless of ability. It is inappropriate and out-of-compliance for this content to be waived.

The coursework required for acquiring the 515 APE endorsement is available here in Maine. Colleagues of mine have completed these courses at The University of Maine. The courses may be offered through various departments including Kinesiology and Physical Education, Physical Education Teacher Preparation, and Special Education. Physical educators committing to

educating themselves in Adapted PE services, refer to both MAHPERD and the Maine APE Task Force for information and assistance in seeking the additional coursework to support the endorsement. There has been a long time understanding with the University to offer the required courses in the summer session or independent study on an as needed basis.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

7. Comment (#8): Commenter is concerned that the following teacher and educational certificates and endorsements have shifted from K-12 to Pre-K to 12.

- Endorsement: Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 Teacher (All Subjects Other than Art and Music)
- Endorsement 282: Teacher of Children with Disabilities
- Endorsement: Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 Teacher

None of these endorsements contain the critical training of the Early Childhood Teacher. It is recognized in the Early Childhood Teacher endorsement qualifications that teaching children under the age of 5 requires a significantly different skillset, yet none of the above endorsements require this specialized training.

Anyone who has witnessed a young child grow and develop has seen the swiftness of developmental changes. Early childhood is a long-standing education specialty. Teachers trained in early childhood understand typically developing milestones. They are most likely able to identify red flags. Teachers trained in the variety of ways disabilities present themselves at different developmental stages, and intervene, change the developing minds and provide the children the best chance to be ready to succeed in kindergarten.

Unfortunately, intervening at older ages make it more difficult to mitigate disability so identifying children with potential disabilities and intervening as early as possible is of paramount importance.² Maine doesn't have time to make a mistake regarding the early intervention and education system without negatively impacting some of Maine's children.

Without the specialized training required to understand and teach young children in a developmentally and educationally appropriate ways, I fear our young children:

- Will access a sub-standard education creating a potential, unintended gap in Kindergarten readiness.
- Will not be identified as having a potential disability as early as possible Should this occur it will result in a systemic failure in the responsibility of ChildFind.
- Will not have the specialized knowledge to provide disability-appropriate education to the child who is eligible for special education, thereby failing to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education.

Response *This is a targeted comment period to address three substantial changes that were changed as the result of the review of the original comments. The three endorsements named in the comment were not changed after the last comment period. No change was made because of this comment.*

8. Comment (#9): Commenter has serious concerns about changing Educational Certificates from K-12 to Pre-K– 12 without the inclusion of the critical training for Pre-K students to obtain these certificates. Currently in Maine in order to obtain an Early Childhood Teacher certificate teachers must complete the following courses:

- Early Childhood Special Education

- Teaching Science for Young Children
- Teaching Numeracy for Young Children
- Diversity of Development in Childhood

If the state would like to move/include the opportunity of teachers to obtain a Pre-K -12 certification then the state should also require that in order to obtain that certification they successfully complete the above course load.

MPF is concerned that if this training is not included teachers who are not equipped to provide curriculum to Pre-K students will be instructing these students. It is crucial for early identification that individuals providing instruction to our Pre-K students in our state are equipped with the skills and knowledge to identify appropriate developmental skill sets. It is well documented that early identification and early intervention are Crucial.

MPF is also concerned the state is moving in this direction in order to ease the transition of 4-year-olds to our public school system. This is a shortcut which our state and our children cannot afford. It is our belief that this change, without the inclusion of the appropriate course load, will result in our Pre-K students not receiving the quality education they deserve.

MPF would like to thank the members of State Board of Education who supported the reinstatement of the Adaptive Physical Education endorsement. It is so important for our special education students to have access to the properly trained professionals in order to access their Free and Appropriate Public Education and Physical Education is a very important aspect of this education.

Adaptive Physical Education provides for our students with disabilities the ability for better emotional regulation, stress relief, modified physical activities which will encourage lifelong participation, social developmental, and better mental health.

***Response:** This is a targeted comment period to address three substantial changes that were made as the result of the review of the original comments. The inclusion of PreK in a number of certificates/endorsements was not changed after the last comment period. No change was made because of this comment.*

9. Comment (#10): Commenter states that at a time when education is facing severe shortages in staffing and the need for flexibility to adjust to meet individual student needs, we cannot afford to have the general ed 020 certification limited to PreK-6. It is imperative that schools be able to flex assignments for all subjects at the middle level, especially in small rural schools. Middle level students need highly engaging career exploration project based learning with interdisciplinary proficiency-based approaches to maximize their motivation and learner agency. At that time in their life they need teachers of students, not teachers focused solely on content. Siloed education has failed to meet the needs of the majority of students in Maine for many years, so we need to remove barriers to the kind of learning experiences that can break that cycle. As a teacher with more than 10 yrs. of middle school experience, a school and district administrator since 2007, I can attest to the critical need for a general PreK-8 020 certification.

***Response:** The Board endeavors to improve the rule by balancing the expectations for well-qualified individuals with the desire to fill positions. No change was made because of this comment.*

10. Comment (#11): Commenter takes this opportunity to thank you for reinstating the Adapted Physical Education endorsement. Some of our most vulnerable students receive physical education through prepared lessons from a qualified APE teacher. The skills they learn improve their confidence and connectivity to school as well as benefit them for the rest of their lives. Secondly, upon further review of the language in Part II, section 1.5 and 1.8, I am asking you to utilize the consistent language of Health Education in place of health in section 1.5 and school health in section 1.8. The term health is very broad; therefore utilizing the term Health Education is specific to the scope of practice for teachers in a school setting. School Health is also a very broad term encompassing many factors of a healthy school environment, of which Health Education is one component.

Finally, I am reiterating my opposition to a combined endorsement for Health and Physical Education. I urge you to not support this new endorsement for the following reasons: Health Education and Physical Education are their own unique content areas, no different than math, English, social studies, and science.

Students need and deserve teachers who are fully prepared to provide the skills and knowledge to help them be successful. The proposed combined endorsement would significantly decrease the teacher preparation courses and student teaching experiences in both Health Education and Physical Education.

Both Health Education and Physical Education have their own unique sets of standards as outlined in the Maine Learning Results. If a combined endorsement for Health Education and Physical Education is approved, I sincerely fear a decrease in the amount of quality Health Education and Physical Education will be provided.

In conclusion, living and teaching in rural Maine, I certainly understand the needs of small, rural schools and therefore the thought process behind the proposed combined endorsement of Health Education and Physical Education. However, I cannot stress enough the unmet need for INCREASED Health and Physical Education. This has never been more evident than during this time of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. A combined HE and PE endorsement will only serve to further dilute both Health Education and Physical Education offered to our students across Maine.

***Response:** In regard to comments beyond the adapted physical education, this is a targeted comment period to address only the three substantial changes that were made as the result of the review of the original comments. No change was made because of this comment.*

11. Comment (#12): Commenter has questions and concerns about proposed changes to Chapter 115. First, I am a holder of 4 certifications in the state of Maine. I have questions regarding 3 of those certificates, which appear to be impacted by this rule change.

1. In the proposed change to the 020, would I be grandfathered to teach K-8 as my current certification has allowed for the past 27 years? I would hope that this is being considered for current holders of the certification.
2. In this proposed rule change there does not appear to be an 079 certification. For those of us that earned this certification, we had to have the 282 certifications *and* prove additional specialization to provide consultation. It appears in the new proposed rules that this will be provided by 282s, with no additional specialization or training? Is this correct? I am concerned about removing the level of expertise and experience the 079 brings to what is generally a challenging situation.

Response: *Please contact the Certification Office to resolve the questions you have. No change was made because of this comment.*

12. Comment (#13): Commenter sent gratitude to the Maine State Board of Education for the reinstatement of the APE Endorsement and reflected that her son is fortunate that he has an experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated Adapted Physical Education Teacher. Unfortunately, many school districts are not so fortunate. It is a disservice to these students. My son, like many students that are similar to him, may be active but equally awkward. My son specifically struggles with motor planning and multiple step directions. He is very distracted and has trouble maintaining focus, and he does not know how to interact and engage in activities with other children or that other children his age are doing. However, my son loves his Adapted Physical Education class! He loves to learn and play and he has developed many skills because of it such as, catching, throwing and kicking a ball, to gymnastics and locomotion patterns. He is currently learning to play the Four Square game with friends! He can ride a scooter and a bike now! He enjoys playing volleyball, running to “Rocky” theme songs and engaging in a session of musical movement and drumming. All of this is possible because of the dedication and expertise of his APE teacher. She knows how to connect and engage with my son in a way that helps him understand her expectations and skills she is teaching. She makes it fun for him and keeps him focused. She continues to research and bring new things to him that she feels would be helpful and always has his best interest at heart. She has the education and training to create a program that meets his needs developmentally and knows how to help him build the skills he will need for future activities and possibly event sports.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

13. Comment (#14): Commenter “appreciates the effort and time it has taken thus far to reach a proposal for a K-6 and 6-12th teacher certification grade span. We humbly ask, however, that the middle level grades (5-8), so crucial to student social emotional skill building (Utne O’Brien & Keister, 2008), mental health (CDC, 2019), and college-going attitude and aspirations (Hill & Wang, 2015), not be omitted from our conversations.

Given the current teacher certification grade span, many teachers in Maine receive little to no formal training on the specific needs of this unique and psychologically vulnerable population. This matters because the middle level years are an important and transformative time in a child’s

life. During these years, students move from child to adolescent and go through countless social and emotional changes. Even before the pandemic, one in five middle schoolers in Maine reported thinking about killing themselves, and students in the middle grades were twice as likely as high school students to report being bullied on school grounds (Maine YRBS 2019). Middle grades students deserve teachers who understand their unique nature and needs. Opening a conversation about the middle level would encourage teacher preparation programs across the state to offer endorsements. It even opens consideration for licensure in the future, focused on preparing preservice and inservice teachers to teach middle school in a way that embodies best practice for this age group. This would mean we could prepare teachers, both pre- and inservice, to teach to social emotional needs, team-teach (which leads to higher teacher satisfaction; Krammar et al., 2018), and teach across content areas in an interdisciplinary way that promotes engagement and motivation (Ozkan & Topsakal, 2021).

Without this conversation, and as Chapter 115 currently stands, middle grades teachers will be prepared simply as junior versions of high school teachers, rather than specialists in early adolescence. Moreover, administrators will be prevented from hiring teachers with cross-content expertise who can operate in a team-based structure. Without this conversation, we risk hiring siloed content-area experts whose primary focus is content rather than students—the very problem that is evident in programs such as Teach for America, which scholars like Ravitch point out have a high teacher turnover rate. This only exacerbates the current gap in hiring and further contributes to teacher attrition—those who are not prepared to teach at the middle level may find it harder to thrive, and therefore leave the profession.

While content-area expertise is important, the middle level years require more breadth of knowledge and a specific toolkit geared towards social emotional skill building, problem solving, and emphasis on collaboration and engagement. The middle level endorsement should differentiate in these ways from the elementary and secondary certification. To strengthen the middle level endorsement, we suggest that preservice teachers earning a middle level certification:

- a.) acquire a depth of knowledge across content areas, or, at minimum, with two specialty content areas;
- b.) acquire skills that are critical to teaching emerging adolescents, such as specific coursework on social emotional skill building, interdisciplinary instruction, and methods that focus on engagement, motivation, and problem solving; and
- c.) understand the intersection of adolescent psychology and education in order to help middle level students cross the threshold from childhood into adolescence—without this knowledge, novice middle level instructors may struggle to “reach” the students they work with when it is most critical to their development.”

Response: *The Middle Level Teacher endorsements for grades 5-8 remain in Chapter 115 and are expanded to include three additional languages. The addition of 3 credits in human development, educational psychology, developmental psychology, adolescent psychology, or child development is meant to address skill building and deemed to be a foundational course for all educators. No change was made because of this comment.*

14. Comment (#15): Commenter recommends the following changes:

“1. The name of the certificate should read Adapted Physical Education and not adaptive physical education. Adapted physical education refers to “diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms, suited to the interests, capabilities, and limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in unrestrictive participation in the vigorous activities of the general physical education program” (AAHPERD, 1952).

2. Update the credentialing of the person teaching students with disabilities with the proposal submitted to Erin Frazier in November of 2020. I have included the highlights and attached the document.

Pathway 1: Endorsement Eligibility – Adapted Physical Education Degree

1. Pre-kindergarten to grade 12. I am suggesting you include transition services in adapted physical education as well (age 21).

2. Earned a bachelor’s degree in adapted physical education (yes, we don’t have such a degree program yet).

Pathway 2: Endorsement Eligibility – Maine Physical Education Degree/license

- Hold a valid Maine (or reciprocal state) professional teaching certificate prekindergarten to grade 12 in physical education.

- Complete a minimum of nine (9) semester hours to include:

- o Special education law and process

- o Methods in teaching APE

- o Assessment APE and reporting

- o Curriculum design (universal design)

- Supervised Practicum in adapted physical education

Pathway 3: Endorsement Eligibility Pathway – Bachelor’s Degree

- Bachelor’s degree

- Twelve (12) semester hours to include

- o Motor learning and development

- o Methods in teaching

- o Methods in teaching physical education

- o Kinesiology

- o Physiology of Exercise

- Twelve (12) semester hours to include:

- o Motor learning and development,

- o Methods in teacher physical education

- o APE assessment and reporting

- o Curriculum design (universal design)

- Minimum 15 weeks of full-time student teaching or a combination of part-time and fulltime student teaching equivalent to 15 weeks

Pathways 4: Conditional Certificate Endorsement

- Bachelor’s degree

- Eighteen hours (18)

- o Motor learning and development

- o Kinesiology

- o Physiology of Exercise

- o Methods in Teaching APE
- o APE assessment and reporting
- o Curriculum design (universal design)”

Response: *Yes, the certificate is Adapted Physical Education. The State Board is sensitive to the availability of coursework in Adapted Physical Education and the Maine DOE is committed to providing professional learning opportunities to educators in the field. No change was made because of this comment.*

15. Comment (#17): Commenter On behalf of our six State-approved teacher preparation programs, the University of Maine System (UMS) is writing in strong support of the grade span for the elementary endorsement being appropriately narrowed to K-6 from the originally proposed PK-8 in the latest draft of the State Board of Education’s Rule Chapter 115. This grade span is more closely aligned with the vast body of research and evidence-based practice pertaining to child development, effective pedagogy, and student outcomes.

However, we are disappointed that the State Board and the Maine Department of Education (Department) did not incorporate recommendations from UMS – the state’s leader in both preparing excellent educators and education research – regarding other concerning changes proposed by the original certification draft rule (posted on July 29, 2021). Specifically, the updated

rule draft fails to address input from our education faculty and researchers about the following:

- The permanent Emergency Teacher Certificate proposed in Part I Standards and Procedures for Credentialing would greatly undermine teacher quality – harming both Maine students and the educator workforce. As proposed, this emergency certification could allow an individual to teach for up to three years, having never taken a single content or pedagogy course or even passed a criminal history records check. Underprepared teachers lead to lower levels of achievement for all students, but disproportionately hurt those in high-poverty schools and/or who are historically underserved. Without provisions that ensure those certified through alternative pathways are prepared to at least a minimum standard before taking full classroom responsibility, and that their professional practice and growth is continually supported, this emergency certification path will undermine important work being led by the Department, the State Board, Maine schools, and our own institutions to close achievement gaps and advance social mobility through equitable access to competent educators.
- Grade spans (with the exception of the now narrowed K-6 elementary endorsement) that remain too expansive and, in some cases, do not require critical foundational courses necessary to adequately prepare educators to best support students. For example, the automatic inclusion of Pre-K in most spans that previously included kindergarten ignores the developmentally appropriate practice and teacher preparation required to serve the unique needs of four-year-old learners, including familiarity with the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards designed for Pre-K students that are separate and distinct from the Maine Learning Results (K-12).
- As the State Board rightly acknowledged by providing other opportunities to demonstrate content knowledge and key teaching skills (GPA, portfolio, etc.), a basic skills test that measures reading, writing, and math (Praxis I) is not the best measure. Instead, Praxis II or another validated, reliable measure that assesses content-area knowledge appropriate to the endorsement sought through Pathway II would be more appropriate.

- The inclusion of explicit language that State-approved programs (Pathway I) are not required to automatically update their course sequences to include the courses being added into Pathway II when the revised Ch. 115 rule ultimately goes into effect, rather that these courses may be considered as part of future program re-approval.

UMS urges the State Board and the Department to review our comment letter on the original draft rule that we submitted on Sept. 15, 2021 (and attached to this submission) for more detail about these concerns and our ideas for improvement and clarity. Additionally, we would urge careful consideration of the relevant independent research from our university colleagues with the Maine Educational Research Policy Institute (MEPRI), which was overviewed in their comments also filed on Sept. 15, 2021.

Response: *This is a targeted comment period to address only the three substantial changes that were made as the result of the review of the original comments. No change was made because of this comment.*

Note: The satisfactory completion of a CHRC is required of everyone who works for a school administrative unit pursuant to 20-A section 6103(1).

16. Comment (#19): Commenters support the change of the Endorsement 020: Elementary Teacher from Pre-K to Grade 8 to Kindergarten to Grade 6. This change honors the unique brain development that research shows occurs prior to entry into kindergarten. This is a positive step forward in establishing the field of early childhood education and the specialized skills required of educators to foster growth in the early years through a birth through K endorsement and Pre-K to 3rd grade endorsement. MaineAEYC also supports the proposed change in extending the 081 Endorsement from Birth to Age Five to Birth to K with the following recommendations:

1. Maine works towards certification inclusion that honor training, credentialing, and apprenticeship programs delivered through Maine Roads to Quality that can be incorporated into Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2. For example, if an educator holds an infant and toddler credential through MRTQ that should fulfill the 3 semester hours of infant/toddler development. Honoring other pathways toward certification will create a wider, more equitable opportunity to recruit and retain highly qualified early childhood educators.
2. Student teaching should be inclusive of birth through 3-year-old programs and higher education programs should be encouraged to continue to provide placements that are inclusive of family child care programs, center based child care programs, and Head Start programs. It is important that student teaching does not get limited to public pre-k and kindergarten programs and that unintended consequences of reducing interest in infant and toddler careers do not occur.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*

17. Comment (#20): Commenters' letter is to document our strong support the retention of the Adapted Physical Education (APE) teaching endorsement (i.e., Endorsement 515: Adapted Physical Education Teacher) that is currently being reviewed by Maine's State Board of Education Certification and Higher Education Committee. We, the Policy and Advocacy Committee of the National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID; www.ncpeid.org), would like to commend the State Board of Education for reinstating the APE endorsement in Maine. By reinstating the APE endorsement and requiring it for the provision of APE services, Maine will remain one of the national leaders in adapted physical education credentialing and service delivery.

Response: *No change was made because of this comment.*