



MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

23 State House Station
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

STATE OF MAINE

The State Board of Education held a regular monthly meeting on October 9, 2025, at the RSU 29/Houlton Superintendent's Conference Room. The following members were present: Chair Paulette Bonneau; Vice Chair Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; Denham Ward; Victoria Cohen; Fern Desjardins; and James Ford

Present via Zoom: Cedar Worster

Absent with excuse: Wendy Ault; Abbey Hamilton

Others Present: Michael Perry, Director Office of Higher Education & Educator Support Services Maine Department of Education; Mallory Cook, Director of Training and Early Educator Engagement at Maine Education Association; Jonathan D. Moody, Superintendent of Schools MSAD54/RSU54 and Erica Tompkins, State Board of Education Office Specialist II.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair Paulette Bonneau called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.
Roll call was taken by Chair Bonneau, and she declared a quorum present.

VISION STATEMENT:

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

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 5, 2025 and September 10, 2025 minutes were tabled.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mallory Cook commented: First, in preparation for next week, I just wanted to thank the Certification and Higher Ed Committee under Vice Chair Keller's leadership on all the work that went into the proposed changes, to Rule Chapter 115, and all of the feedback that was elicited from the field. I know that was a tremendous amount of work, and, thank you for all of the time and energy that went into that.

Secondly, MEA wanted to extend an invitation to the State Board of Education to our series of winter conferences. We are hosting one in Machias on January 24th, that's a Saturday, and another at United Technology Center in Bangor on Saturday, February 21st. We enjoy having you at these opportunities to showcase professional learning and for you to interact with educators but we, in a conversation we had recently with some key stakeholders, we realized that it's really important to kind of make this connection with educators in the field to governance.

So, I know, that later this afternoon, Denham is going to talk about the Professional Standards Board, and it's my understanding that they did have a meeting recently, but when we're trying to sort of fill those vacancies and make those appointments, or when we're trying to find, educators to maybe one day fill James' seat.

We want them to understand what those roles are and what the responsibilities are, and we think that if we have you at these opportunities, and they understand who you are, and you could share what you do, it will make those connections for them. So, we'd like to extend those invites and create as many opportunities as we can to connect those dots for practicing educators.

STUDENT TRANSFER APPEAL:

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REQUESTS FOR REVIEW OF STUDENT TRANSFER REQUESTS

Paulette Bonneau, Chair of the Board, read a procedure for the Board when going into executive session to review requests for review of the Superintendents' decisions on student transfer requests.

The Board will be considering requests for Board review of the Superintendents'-decisions regarding requested transfers of students to another school district, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205(6)(F). The Board will be going into executive session to consider the requests because each one involves reviewing and discussing information contained in student records made confidential by the federal law known as FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The parents and any attorney representing a parent are welcome to attend the executive session for the discussion of their particular student's transfer, as are the Superintendents of the school districts involved in that requested transfer. The Board will review each of the transfer requests in separate executive sessions. Today, the Board has three student transfer requests.

After the Board comes out of executive session, the Board will entertain a motion and take a vote on the disposition of the request in public session.

The Board's role in these proceedings is to review the Superintendents' decisions based on the record that was before them at the time they made the decision. Although the statute directs the Board to "communicate with" the parties involved, which the Board has done, the Board cannot accept any new evidence pertaining to a transfer request that was not considered or not available in the record at the time of the Superintendents' decision.

The Board provides for public comment, which was explained earlier in the meeting. In the executive session the same rules apply for public comment and there will be a three-minute time limit for comment. This is not a time for debate or a time to introduce new evidence. It is a time for families to highlight the things they want the Board to consider in the record.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Denham Ward, and unanimously voted by those present for the Board to go into Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes, section 405, subsection 6, paragraph F, to discuss information contained in records that are confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title 20 of the United States Code, section 1232g relating to a request from JB to review the Superintendents' decisions to approve or disapprove a request for a student transfer, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205, subsection 6, paragraph F at 1:13 PM.

The Board returned to the regular business meeting at 1:38 PM.

MOTION by Denham Ward, seconded by Thomas Keller, voted 5 in favor and 3 against (Ed Morin, James Ford, Victoria Cohen) that it was not in JB's best interest given the information the State Board received to approve a transfer. The transfer was denied.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Edmond Morin, and unanimously voted by those present for the Board to go into Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes, section 405, subsection 6, paragraph F, to discuss information contained in records that are confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title 20 of the United States Code, section 1232g relating to a request from BB to review the Superintendents' decisions to approve or disapprove a request for a student transfer, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205, subsection 6, paragraph F at 1:42 PM.

The Board returned to the regular business meeting at 1:51 PM.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield and voted unanimously by those present that it was not in BB's best interest given the information the State Board received to approve a transfer. The transfer was denied.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present for the Board to go into Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes, section 405, subsection 6, paragraph F, to discuss information contained in records that are confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title 20 of the United States Code, section 1232g relating to a request from ZM to review the Superintendents' decisions to approve or disapprove a request for a student transfer, pursuant to Title 20-A, section 5205, subsection 6, paragraph F at 1:53 PM.

The Board returned to the regular business meeting at 2:04 PM.

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Fern Desjardins, voted unanimously by those present that it was in ZM's best interest given the information the State Board received to approve a transfer. The transfer was approved.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- I have spent some time this past month continuing to support Erica in her position. I had a meeting with Heather Dutton regarding Maine Pays and the State Board. The State is converting over to this system and it will be more efficient for invoicing and tracking our expenses.
- With the help of Nicole Dennis, our portion of the supplemental budget was submitted on Monday, October 6. The request for a revenue line to receive grants was included in our submission, accompanied by a starting balance of \$500. We will see what happens. It was rejected last year.
- I am currently working on the State Report, which is due at the end of the month.
- I sent you a list of all of the carryover bills. We have a CTE bill, bills related to construction, and a student transfer appeals bill that we have been involved with. There are many carryover bills with competing needs and financial requests.
- I will be attending the NASBE conference at the end of the month, along with Fern and Denham. I will also participate in the MSMA conference representing the board.
- I received word yesterday that our application was accepted to present at the Educate Maine Conference. The workshop title is The Maine State Board of Education: Policy, advice, enforcement.

Vice Chair, Thomas Keller

- I solicited questions from members and attended an SBE agenda review meeting with Paulette and Dan. I do want to report that one of the questions was celebrating the fact that the ESSA dashboard now had district results for assessments on their assessment tab. However, that seems to have disappeared.
- I participated in the MELMAC Foundation's Peer Learning Conference, which I would recommend if people have that opportunity.
- I learned that Victoria Cohen was named chair of the MDOE, apparently now Math Action Plan, congratulations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

The School Construction Committee met on September 26.

Fern reported on discussions at the September 12 and 26 meetings of the Governor’s Commission on School Construction. On September 12, the draft of essential roles and responsibilities of an organizational model was updated. A commission member described the value of developing success factors to track the progress of a new approach and commission members responded favorably to developing success measures. Glenn Cummings, Director of Green Schools, Maine DOE, and invited guests discussed energy efficiency and the concept of sustainable schools.

At the September 26 meeting, commission members provided feedback on a first draft of a potential organizational model for essential roles and responsibilities. It would be a quasi-independent state agency.

The update on the revised planning documents for school construction that Fern discussed at the last State Board meeting will take place at the November 13 workshop of the State Board.

The appeal that Commissioner Makin received on the point rating of a SAU on the 2024-2025 Rating Cycle Proposed Priority List is still under review; therefore, the Proposed Priority List is not ready for approval as the Final Priority List.

Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):

The Certification and Higher Education (C&HE) Committee met on August 27, 2025.

- We have a lot of work coming up, because the UNE report is out there, UMA is about to undergo a visit.
- We are still gathering information from Beal University, which is a little perplexing. Northeastern University's Roux Institute report is yet to be finalized.
- We do have an exhibit that we will look at later for the Maine College of Art and Design review team, so a lot of review going on right now.
- As Dan mentioned, the public comment period is open for Chapter 115 from September 24th to October 24th, with a public hearing scheduled on October 15th from 3 to 5, over Zoom and at the Cross Office Building. Our next meeting is October 22nd.

Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):

The CTE Committee did not meet in September.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

No Report.

Student voices (Cedar Worster, Abbey Hamilton, and James Ford):

No Report.

Student Membership (Edmond Morin):

No Report.

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

The Charter Commission has not met yet for October. We are going to vote on recommissioning two schools when we do meet. We also will be discussing CRCS and land they are looking at in Skowhegan.

Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):

The Professional Standards Board met for the first time in a year. There's no possible way to get a quorum because there's not enough people appointed to the professional standards book.

They're working with MEA to find members; however, it is very specific on who should be appointed for broad representation, which makes it difficult.

Andrew is still chairing it.

NASBE:

Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):

- Fern and Denham Ward attended the NASBE Exchange on October 6. The session was led by Chair-Elect Byron Ernest from Indiana. Reg Leichty of Foresight Law + Policy provided federal updates, which was followed by breakout sessions. The breakouts were by topic instead of by region. Topics selected were (1) federal updates; (2) Boardmanship and governance; (3) teachers and leaders; and (4) assessment and accountability, reading and math. Feedback at each Exchange provides guidance in planning future Exchanges.
- The Finance and Audit Committee, chaired by Fern, met on September 17. They discussed the FY2026 budget draft. It is largely a steady budget with basically the same salaries amount as FY2025 and a slight increase in fringe benefits.
- The Executive Committee met on September 15 and October 6. Both meetings included the evaluation and contract of President and CEO Paolo DeMaria. There were also updates for the 2025 and 2026 annual conferences.
- The Board of Directors met on September 22. Directors discussed the FY2026 Draft Budget, an updated document on the status of the services, projects and operations of NASBE, conference updates for 2025 and 2026, updates on grants and sponsorships, and the proposed bylaws changes. Committee chairs reported out on their recent meetings and activities.
- Fern reminded Board members to read the *October NASBE News* emailed by President and CEO Paolo DeMaria on Friday, October 3. Federal Updates are often of interest to members and can be found toward the end of all monthly issues.

Government Affairs Committee (Thomas Keller):

No Report

Public Education Positions Committee (Paulette Bonneau):

No Report

UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS:

SBE calendar

NEW BUSINESS

Request to approve the Maine College of Art & Design Educator Preparation Program Review Team

BACKGROUND: The educator preparation program (EPP) at the Maine College of Art and Design is reaching the end of its current approval cycle. The institution has indicated its desire to renew State Board approval for its existing program and has prepared the requisite self-study materials in advance of an in-person review.

State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114: *Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel* lays out the process by which educator preparation programs are approved in Maine. The chapter defines a review team as, “A team of educators recommended to the State Board of Education by the Commissioner”. Subsection 3.4 (“Preparation of the Self-Assessment”) further explains that a “Review Team will consist of 4-5 team members, plus the MDOE consultant and a State Board of Education Observer”.

The following individuals have agreed to serve on the team for this EPP review:

Patricia Law, EdD, Director of Professional Development Programs, University of Southern Maine
Megan London, MEd, Co-Chair of Education, Eastern Maine Community College
Stephen Marositz, EdD, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Saint Joseph’s College of Maine
Argy Nestor, MEd, and 1995 Maine Teacher of the Year

Non-voting observers of the review will include the following:

James E. Ford, MEd, Maine State Board of Education
Laura Cyr, PhD, Maine Department of Education
Michael T. Perry, Maine Department of Education

Representatives of the institution have confirmed no conflicts of interest exist with this slate of review team members. Pursuant to Rule Chapter 114, Subsection 3.5(a), this review team is hereby “submitted to the State Board for approval prior to visitation”.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Rule Chapter 114, Subsection 3.5(a), approve Dr. Patricia Law, Megan London, Dr. Stephen Marositz, and Argy Nestor to serve on the review team for the Maine College of Art and Design Educator Preparation Program review, with James E. Ford serving as State Board observer.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Denham Ward and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Rule Chapter 114, Subsection 3.5(a), approve Dr. Patricia Law, Megan London, Dr. Stephen Marositz, and Argy Nestor to serve on the review team for the Maine College of Art and Design Educator Preparation Program review, with James E. Ford serving as State Board observer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The next regular State Board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Burton Cross State Office Building and virtually via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by

Erica Tompkins, Office Specialist II

State Board of Education