



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN
COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT #X.C.

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Michael T. Perry, Director of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, Maine Department of Education, on behalf of Commissioner Pender Makin

DATE: February 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Request to Extend Existing Approval of the College of the Atlantic Educator Preparation Program by Twelve Months

BACKGROUND:

The College of the Atlantic (COA) offers state-approved Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) which were last approved by the State Board of Education effective Fall 2020; the review was conducted virtually at a delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the review was finally conducted in Spring 2021, COA's EPPs received full approval, with praise for the small program's sustained success and unique niche within the state's EPP community. Later, the Board approved an adjustment in COA's subsequent review date to restore a five-year cadence between review visits.

On January 23, 2026, Linda Fuller, who serves as Director of Educational Studies at the College of the Atlantic, indicated the institution's desire to request a further one-year extension of their current EPP approval. The request was made in light of several compounding factors:

- (1) COA's lead Educational Studies faculty member retired in December 2025, and a search is ongoing to fill that staff position, with an anticipated start date of September 1, 2026, for the new faculty member.
- (2) COA's Director of Educational Studies (Linda Fuller herself) is retiring on June 30, 2026.
- (3) COA will soon be engaged in a time-sensitive request to extend their bachelor's degree authorization in Maine, a process that is most likely to produce a (potentially competing) State Board review. While this matter is unrelated to the institution's EPP approval, the reviews would compete for administrative capacity at both the institution and the state.

State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, *Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel*, subsection 3.11(e), allows that "requests for extensions for existing approval, due to extraordinary circumstances, may be granted at the discretion of the State Board of Education."

The Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Education discussed this request during its regular meeting on January 28, 2026.

RECOMMENDATION: That, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11(e), the State Board of Education approve the College of the Atlantic's request to extend the existing approval of its educator preparation programs by twelve months, from Fall 2026 to Fall 2027.