



MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

23 State House Station
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

STATE OF MAINE

The State Board of Education held a special meeting on December 1, 2025, at the Burton Cross State Office Building in Augusta, Maine and virtually via Zoom. The following members were present: Chair Paulette Bonneau; Vice Chair Thomas Keller; Wendy Ault; Fern Desjardins; James Ford; Victoria Kornfield; Edmond Morin; and Denham Ward.

Others Present: Scott Brown, Director, School Construction Programs, MDOE; Heather Manchester, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, RSU 17/MSAD 17; Lance Whitehead and Joe Britton, Jr., Architects, Lavallee/Brensinger Architects; and Erica Tompkins, Office Specialist II, State Board of Education.

Absent with Excuse: Victoria Cohen; Abbey Hamilton; and Cedar Worster.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Paulette Bonneau called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM.

Chair Bonneau took roll call and declared a quorum present.

VISION STATEMENT:

Read by Chair Bonneau: 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:

By consensus, the following item was added to the agenda:

- V.B. Redesignation of Calendar Year for RSU 53/MSAD 53 – Manson Park School Construction Project

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

NEW BUSINESS:

MAJOR CAPITAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM; WAIVER REQUEST CONSIDERATION; RSU 17/MSAD 17 – AGNES GRAY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

STATEMENT OF FACT: By a unanimous vote of those present at the September 14, 2022 meeting of the State Board of Education, Project #6, the Agnes Gray School in RSU 17/MSAD 17, was moved to the Approved Projects List of the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle, Major Capital School Construction Program. The motion “further recommended that Section 6.2.F., Time Limitations, ¶1, be waived by the State Board of Education until a workable plan for Concept Approval has been developed by the Department and the designated school systems. Further, that the Department will provide the State Board of Education with periodic updates on the status of progress toward Concept Approvals of the designated projects.”

Due to the waiver mentioned above on the Time Limitations for the project, the Department of Education and the School Construction Committee of the State Board of Education followed up on their waiver at the October 9, 2024 meeting of the State Board. Commissioner Pender Makin and the School Construction Committee recommended to the State Board, and the Board adopted the motion, “that in accordance with State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education approve 2025 as the assigned calendar year for the three projects identified in this exhibit to obtain Concept Approval. Failure to obtain Concept Approval in 2025 shall result in removal from the Approved Projects List unless a waiver is obtained from the State Board at least 30 days prior to December 31, 2025.” The Agnes Gray School was one of the three projects identified in the exhibit.

Heather Manchester, Superintendent of Schools in RSU 17/MSAD 17, formally requested “a waiver to allow the district to continue moving forward with the Agnes Gray School project without removal from the Approved Projects List” in a correspondence to the State Board on November 26, 2025. Superintendent Manchester included a *Proposed Timetable for Concept Approval* identifying actions to be taken from December 2025 to November 2026 when a referendum would take place in all eight towns of Oxford Hills. The process was further outlined in a *Pre-Referendum Schedule* by Lavalley/Brensinger Architects that Superintendent Manchester included in her correspondence. She further explained why the Site Selection phase was delayed, plans

on moving forward with the Concept Design, and being ready for a Local Referendum vote in November 2026. Moreover, she reaffirmed the district's commitment to a facility that would meet the educational needs of RSU 17/MSAD 17.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On December 1, 2025, the School Construction Committee recommended that this exhibit be placed on the December 1, 2025 State Board of Education's special meeting agenda and that pursuant to State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education grant a Time Limitation waiver to RSU 17/MSAD 17 and approve 2026 as their new assigned calendar year for their proposed timetable and plan for obtaining Concept Approval by December 31, 2026.

MOTION by Fern Desjardins, seconded by Edmond Morin, and unanimously voted by those present that pursuant to State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education grant a Time Limitation waiver to RSU 17/MSAD 17 and approve 2026 as their new assigned calendar year for their proposed timetable and plan for obtaining Concept Approval by December 31, 2026.

REDESIGNATION OF CALENDAR YEAR FOR RSU 53/MSAD 53 – MANSON PARK SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

STATEMENT OF FACT: By a unanimous vote of those present at the December 13, 2023 meeting of the State Board of Education, Project #8, the RSU 53/MSAD 53 Manson Park School, was moved to the Approved Projects List of the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle, Major Capital School Construction Program, and designated for Concept Approval in calendar year 2025.

At the November 13, 2025 meeting of the State Board of Education, members unanimously adopted a motion, pursuant to MRS Title 20-A §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), granting Site Approval to RSU 53/MSAD 53 for a new Elementary/Middle School construction project as presented.

At the meeting, Superintendent Sharon Littlefield and Kathy Cogan, architect with CHA Consulting, discussed plans for returning to the State Board for Concept Approval in a couple months and to hold their local referendum vote in the spring of 2026. The Timeline on the district's website confirms those plans.

MOTION by Fern Desjardins, seconded by Edmond Morin, and unanimously voted by those present that pursuant to State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for

Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education redesignate the assigned calendar year within which Concept Approval shall be obtained for the RSU 53/MSAD 53 Manson Park School Construction Project from 2025 to 2026 based on RSU 53/MSAD 53 Superintendent Sharon Littlefield and CHA Consulting's presentation at the November 13, 2025 meeting of the State Board.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Board members, Supt. Manchester, Architects Whitehead and Britton, and Office Specialist Tompkins were thanked for their attendance at the special meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 12:27 P.M.

Fern Desjardins, Chair, School Construction Committee, MSBE