



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 February 12, 2025, at the Burton M. Cross building in Augusta, Maine and virtually via Zoom. The following members were present: Chair Fern Desjardins; Wendy Ault; James Ford; Thomas Keller; Victoria Kornfield; Ed Morin; Phat Thai; Denham Ward; and Cedar Worster

Absent With Excuse: Paulette Bonneau

Others Present: Michael Perry, MDOE; Mallory Cook, Director of Training & Early Educator Engagement, MEA; Gerry Durgin, MIAAA; Dave Smith, Director, COGNIA; and Emily Cummins, Office Specialist II, State Board of Education

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

Emily Cummins took roll call. Chair Desjardins declared a quorum present.

Emily was recognized before the opening of the meeting for her 10 months of service to the State Board of Education. She resigned effective February 21, 2025 to accept a position working for the State of Maine.

VISION STATEMENT:

Read by student member, Cedar Worster: 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.

POEM READING:

Poem Read by Victoria Kornfield – “*The Wreath People*” by Alice Persons.

Victoria also recognized Chair Desjardins for the article *She is a “leader of leaders”* that appeared in the February 2025 edition of *The Clarion*, The Newsletter for Retired Educators: Maine Education Association Retired.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Ed Morin, and voted four in favor with one abstention (Wendy Ault) to approve the January 8, 2025 minutes as presented. The motion was adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public Comment.

OFFICER’S REPORTS:

Chair, Fern Desjardins

- Orientation with the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on January 15, 2025, went smoothly with Paulette, Tori, Ed and Fern making the presentation. The committee was provided with an updated copy of the status of the State Board’s 5-Year Strategic Plan milestones, which was followed by a Q & A period.
- The Governor’s Commission on School Construction held a meeting with superintendents via Zoom on January 10 to hear observations, concerns, and recommendations on school construction and renovations. On January 17, Fern attended their regular monthly meeting to receive an update from Valerie Landry, Chair of the Commission, and reports from the three subcommittees – Design and Construction, Finance, and Policy. Fern is a member of the Design and Construction Subcommittee. They met on January 16 for a presentation by MEPRI on the Maine School Building Inventory Data report requested by the Maine State Legislature, and findings from the consultants touring Major Capital Improvement Program school sites around the state. On January 31, they met again to review Rules Chapter 60, 61, and 64 and the 21-Step Construction Process.
- Fern, Wendy, and Denham attended the MSSA Winter Convocation on January 16-17 in South Portland. Jimmy Casas’ presentation on *Recalibrate the Culture* was about cultivating a healthier culture for members of school communities. Jonathan Moody, Heather Perry, and Jon Doty held a session on *Chapter 115: Imagine A New Look at Certification Pathways* and Robbie Feinberg’s session was titled *MSSA Legislative Advocacy is a Team Effort!*
- She attended the webinar *Measure What Matters: The Expanding View of Educational Excellence in Maine* on January 29. Battelle for Kids presented the

key findings and priorities from their statewide listening and conversation tour that included 19 community conversations with hundreds of participants representing all Maine counties and more than 100 one-on-one interviews in five locations around the state.

- Fern followed up on her emails to Board members regarding the Board of Education Study Report for LD 1018 by the Maine DOE; the 5-Year Strategic Plan 2022-2026 updated January 26, 2025; and the Supplemental Budget, Biennial Budget, and change package request. The State Board's initiatives for an executive director and the ability to accept grant funds didn't make it in either of the two budgets so Fern requested that the Director of Finance add the two initiatives to the change package list. It was done on January 30.
- The Recruitment and Retention Workgroup of the Key State Leaders Addressing Educator Workforce Shortages Collective met February 10. They discussed existing efforts, organizations and individuals involved, data available, the Teach Maine Framework, innovative solutions, needs, and moving forward with goals and next steps.
- Fern thanked Ed Morin for the excellent work he's done on requests for publicity for the recently released Student Membership Application, working closely with Emily Cummins to train her on the process, and updating the poster and all related application materials.

Vice Chair, Paulette Bonneau

- Paulette presented at the Board's orientation to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on January 15, 2025.
- She attended six meetings with members of the Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee.
- On January 23, 2025, Paulette attended the Career and Technical Education Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

School Construction Committee (Fern Desjardins):

The School Construction Committee did not meet in January.

Certification and Higher Education (Thomas Keller):

The Certification and Higher Education Committee met on February 10, 2025.

- The Beal University review was set, and the team would be voted on later in this meeting.

- Much time was spent reviewing the committee draft of amendments to Chapter 115, Part 1. They were able to review only 10 of the 30 pages in deliberations that took place for an hour.
- Michael Perry indicated that he would distribute the Annual Report template to the EPPs.
- Next meeting is February 26, 2025.

Career and Technical Education (Edmond Morin):

The Career and Technical Education Committee met on January 23, 2025.

- Ed joined Fern, Paulette and Tori for the State Board Orientation session with the Legislature's Education and Cultural Affairs Committee.
- Action was taken approving the Quarterly Perkins report for the period October 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, which was sent on to the full State Board.
- Melissa Sherwood, CTE Perkins Grant Manager for Maine DOE, provided the Perkins report and answered questions from board members.
- Joan DeCosta, Academic Program Coordinator for the Maine Community College System, provided information about how the Community College uses the 50% of Perkins funds they receive. Joan agreed to send a copy of her presentation to the Committee.
- Dave Keaton, Executive Director of Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education, reported that what is known as the “Ratio Bill” has been resubmitted. The measure didn’t quite make it through the last session. It would lower the number of students in a given CTE program in smaller schools for them to have Full Time Faculty Equivalencies with fewer students. He also noted that approval of the Social Security Fairness Act removes a major barrier when it comes to hiring CTE instructors.
- There is a skills competition on March 13 and 14, 2025, at the United Technology Center in Bangor.
- Bobby Deetjen, Director of the Midcoast School of Technology in Rockland, reported that, like other CTE’s, his school is in the middle of budget season. Three quarters of the region’s 8th graders have toured the building and they have seen an increase in applications.
- Kevin Lavoie, Director at St. John Valley Technology Center in Frenchville, says they are trying to wrap up the cooperative agreements for integrated credits with each of their sending school boards as mandated by LD 436. They have established a Commercial Driver’s License program, which currently has a cohort of nine students who will be able to go right into the workforce when they finish the program.
- UTC Director and MACTE President, Amanda Peterson, spoke about a Policy Leaders Academy they were holding with 60 to 70 new legislators coming

through to learn more about CTE, including partnerships between CTE and the workforce. She says they've had a very successful partnership with the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) and that UTC's big focus now is exploratory courses, which generally serve the needs of younger high school students as they decide which direction they want to take in CTE.

- Kate Howell from Educate Maine reported on the education symposium they held which attracted several CTE educators. There's been discussion about summer externship for CTE instructors.

Legislative Action (Paulette Bonneau):

Legislative Action met on January 31, 2025.

- Approximately 2,000 bills have been submitted.
- Thus far they are:

Monitoring:

LD 11 An Act Regarding Temperature Standards for School Buildings

LD 74 An Act to Update the System of Learning Results Review Timeline

LD 225 An Act to Reduce Property Taxes and Finance Public School Construction and Education Through a 3 Percent Sales Tax on Hotel and Lodging Place Rentals

LD 282 Act to Raise the Limit on the Total Number of Public Charter Schools

LD 370 An Act to Raise the Minimum State Standard for Mathematics Education for a High School Diploma

LD 363 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the School Capital Improvement Fund

LD 324 An Act to Increase Reading Proficiency in Public Schools

Taking action on the following:

LD 242 An Act to Extend the Maximum Time Period for Certain School Construction Bonds

LD 218 An Act to Make Student Transfer Agreements Renew Automatically Except in Certain Circumstances

LD 81 An Act to Foster Innovation in Maine Schools by Updating the Requirements of School Innovation Waivers

LD 323 An Act to Fund Staff Support for the State Board of Education

LD 369 An Act to Grant or Extend Conditional Teaching Certificates Under Certain Circumstances

- The legislature is not meeting next week, but many hearings will be scheduled thereafter.

Student Voices (James Ford, Cedar Worster and Phat Thai):

The Student Voices Committee met on February 10, 2025.

James and Cedar reported on student cabinet activities.

Student Membership (Ed Morin):

- The effort to recruit a new student member for the State Board is well underway.
- Application materials were distributed at the end of January to high school principals, counselors and CTE Directors in Maine's First District.
- The deadline for submitting applications is February 28th, which is a week after the end of February break.
- Applications may be submitted either electronically or by traditional mail.
- In March, James, Phat and Ed will hold a Zoom meeting to review applications and choose six finalists, which they will interview soon after.
- The names of three students will then be sent on to Governor Mills, who makes the decision about whom to nominate.
- Ed has submitted a press release to the Maine DOE communications team as well as the Maine State Superintendents Association as they try to inform as many folks as they can about what they see as an exciting educational learning and leadership position.
- Phat and Cedar have also been exploring the use of social media.

Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee (Fern Desjardins):

- Fern provided a summary of activities of the Student Transfers Ad Hoc Committee from January 8 to February 10 in an email to all Board members on February 10. The Board discussed the latest draft by the ad hoc committee and Fern's draft in the morning workshop.
- The State Board's ad hoc committee will be meeting with MSSA representatives on February 14 at 3:30 pm.

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

The Charter Commission met on February 10.

Tori reported that Lana Ewing, Executive Director, has completed mid-term visits and the reports will be coming out soon.

Professional Standards Board (Denham Ward):

The Professional Standards Board did not meet.

NASBE:***Executive Committee/Board of Directors (Fern Desjardins):***

- The Board of Directors met on January 22, 2025. Directors received the Year-End 2024 Financial Report, NASBE services being provided in Nebraska and Tennessee, and updates on their projects (e.g., Early Childhood, Principal Quality, High School Transformation, High Quality Instructional Materials, and EdTech Advisory Group). They also received updates on grants and their New State Recruitment Initiative. Keven Ellis, NASBE Chair, made committee recommendations for Directors to vote on. Tom Keller was voted as Vice Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Fern congratulated Tom.
- Fern attended the first NASBE Exchange on February 3. This replaces the monthly Office Hours and may also include the Governmental Affairs Committee and Public Education Positions Committee in the future. There were 40 participants, including NASBE staff members. The goals of the Exchange are to connect with peers nationwide; learn what's happening in other states; and share what's working in each participant's state. The topics brought up at the first Exchange included high-quality instructional materials, NAEP results and actions taking place in states, math graduation requirements, math standards, personal finance course requirement in states, model curriculum framework in Kentucky, and accountability measures used in some states. Fern shared the work happening with Chapter 115 in Maine. The next Exchange will be held on Monday, March 3 at 4:00 pm.
- Many webinars are being offered on the Nation's Report Card. Fern attended two of them: *2024 Nation's Report Card: Reflecting on the Results* by CCSSO, NGA, and CGCS and *Need to Know More on NAEP Scores?* by the Education Commission of the States and the National Assessment Governing Board. Results challenge us to raise achievement in reading and math. Grade 4 math scores increased for the nation between 2022 and 2024 and some states show us that progress is possible. They've used NAEP data to improve student achievement and close gaps.
- The *NASBE February Update* was released February 7 via email. Stay informed about NASBE's resources, program offerings, research data, federal updates, etc. by reading the monthly updates.

Government Affairs Committee (Thomas Keller):

The NASBE Governmental Affairs Committee did not meet.

Public Education Positions Committee (Paulette Bonneau):

The Public Education Positions Committee did not meet.

UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS: No Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request Approval of the Quarterly Report of the Maine Carl D. Perkins Grant as authorized under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For The 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224).

The Quarterly Report was not received with the exhibit so the item was withdrawn from the agenda.

Request approval of the Review Committee for Beal University Application for Masters Degree Granting Authorization

BACKGROUND: Beal University is authorized by the State of Maine to provide degree programming at the associate degree and bachelor's degree levels. The institution has submitted an application for state approval to provide degree programming at a master's degree level.

The following individuals have agreed to serve on the Beal University Review Committee:

Deborah Hedeon, PhD, President, University of Maine at Fort Kent (Chair)
Hannah Carter, PhD, Associate Provost for Online & Continuing Education, University of Maine
Dwayne Conway, PhD, Dean of Workforce Development, Central Maine Community College
Tracy Elliot, Vice President of Finance & Controller, University of Maine System
Karen T. Pardue, Ph.D., RN, CNE, FNAP, ANEF, Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives & Professor of Nursing and Population Health, University of New England

The two non-voting observers of the Beal University review will be as follows:

Denham Ward, State Board of Education
Michael T. Perry, Maine Department of Education

Pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 149(2)(A)(5), Review Committees for degree granting authorization "will consist of at least five (5) individuals who will be representative of Maine's institutions of higher education" and are "subject to the final approval of the State Board of Education".

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Board of Education approve Dr. Deborah Hedeon of the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Dr. Hannah Carter of the University of Maine, Dr. Dwayne Conway of Central Maine Community College, Tracy Elliot of the University of Maine System, and Dr. Karen T. Pardue of the University of New England to serve as the Review Committee for the Beal University Application for Master's Degree Granting Authorization.

MOTION by Tom Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield, and unanimously voted by those present that the State Board of Education approve Dr. Deborah Hedeon of the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Dr. Hannah Carter of the University of Maine, Dr. Dwayne Conway of Central Maine Community College, Tracy Elliot of the University of Maine System, and Dr. Karen T. Pardue of the University of New England to serve as the Review Committee for the Beal University Application for Master's Degree Granting Authorization.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The next regular State Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Burton M. Cross Building in Augusta, and virtually via Zoom.
- Fern asked members to submit their vouchers prior to Emily's last day working for the Board on February 21.
- Board members thanked Emily and wished her well in her new job.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 2:23 PM.

Emily Cummins, Office Specialist II
Maine State Board of Education