



Certification and Higher Education Committee

Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the April 26, 2023 Meeting

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a virtual monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, via Zoom. The following were present: Chair Wendy Ault, Fern Desjardins, Thomas Keller, Victoria Kornfield, and Denham Ward (Board Members). Deputy Commissioner Chuhta; Michael Perry, Acting Director of the Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; and Sandra Bourget, State Board of Education Office Specialist.

Guests: Mallory Cook; Cynthia Alexander; Rose Angell; Amy Johnson; Dave Keaton; Dolly Sullivan; John Maddaus; Andrew McCullough; Rachelle Bristol; Jennifer Kelly; Kaitlin Young; Kathy Yardley; Lawrence Ronco; Michelle McClellan; Penny Bishop; and Michael Kebede.

Chair Wendy Ault called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

Follow Up Required:

Chair Ault reviewed several items from the previous meeting that needed follow up. Specifically, State Board of Education Chapter 114 statutory authority; Chapter 149 and Chapter 170 clarification regarding additional degrees; Beal University site visit; annual calendar for EPP reviews; status of UMM; and Syracuse University request for renewal site visit.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Victoria Kornfield, seconded by Thomas Keller, and unanimously voted by those present to accept the March 1, 2023, and March 22, 2023, minutes as amended. The motion passes.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Workforce Shortage Challenges Discussion:

Chair Ault thanked Mallory Cook and Cynthia Alexander for their efforts in identifying members for this panel discussion. Panelists include: Rachelle Bristol, Maine Education Association; Mallory Cook, Maine Education Association; Jennifer Kelly, Falmouth Public Schools; Michelle McClellan, Cape Elizabeth School Department; and Andrew McCullough, Brunswick School Department and Professional Standards Board.

Highlights:

- Significant Ed Tech shortages. Many Occupational Therapists apply for Ed Tech positions, so the two were combined. OTs were hired to fill those vacancies.
- Grow Your Own model works well if mentors are adequately prepared and compensated for their time.
- Need active recruitment.
- Consider regional certification.
- Retention is impacted by five main areas: Degradation and lack of elevation of the profession; cost of education; mentorship issues; school culture; and lack of support in career advancement.
- Salary.
- A collective voice has more impact than a single voice. Perhaps a coalition is needed.
- Lack of young people pursuing the profession.
- How can we support new Mainers as they navigate the process/system?
- Apprenticeship and Residency programs exist.
- Federal Grants are available through the Department of Labor.
- Consider micro-credentialing and digital badging.

The State Board of Education welcomes continued conversation on this topic.

Higher Education:

- UMF has requested a delay for its state approval and CAEP accreditation self-study and accreditation visit and cited several reasons for this request.

MOTION by Thomas Keller, seconded by Victoria Kornfield and unanimously voted by those present to approve UMF's request to delay the CAEP and State reviews for 15 months from the original due date. The motion passes.

- NIFS has a virtual site review on May 2, 2023.
- There should be a review committee formed for approval at an upcoming C&HE Committee meeting for the Renewal of Syracuse University's SUPA Program.
- The committee discussed the need for a site visit for a Master's Degree in Nursing at Beal University. Michael has gathered some information but will investigate further and report back to the committee.
- Annual Report Document feedback – Title II does not align with State Board report. In particular, the State Board report is due in April while the Title II report is due in May.

Certification:

- 3,652 applications were received in March.
- The team viewed 14,498 educator profiles in March.
- Working to upgrade storage in MEIS. The system recently went down for a couple of hours.
- Looking to update the language MEIS provides. Letters are autogenerated and sometimes difficult to understand. We intend to improve communication with applicants.

- FBI Audit will take place next month for background checks and fingerprinting data.
- 2,550 violations in January dropped to 1,339 currently.
- UMaine Special Education issue: One cohort seeking certification falls under the new rule while the other cohort falls under the old rule.
- On behalf of DOE, Michael testified in favor of L.D. 1217 Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program for Alternative Teacher Certification.
- EMCC's Learning Facilitator Program serves as a successful model to L.D. 343 An Act to Invest in an Educational Technician Training Program to Address Shortages in Public Schools and L.D. 1366 An Act to Address Educational Technician Shortages in Public Schools by Establishing an Alternative Certification Pathway.
- Processing time for new applicants is approximately 3-3 1/2 weeks.
- Call hold time averages seven minutes during the busiest time of day but often there is no hold time.
- DOE will be advertising a Certification Coordinator position.
- Michael has an upcoming meeting with Kathy Warren, Education Data Systems Manager, to discuss the mapping project.

Update from the University of Maine Educator Preparation Program:

On behalf of the UMaine System EPPs, Kathy Yardley from UMF attended today's meeting. She discussed challenges and opportunities around Chapter 115. Leaders have discussed ways to improve Pathway II for candidates coming from UMaine institutions going through the transcript analysis process. The System suggests creating a pathway allowing the approved institutions across the state to indicate which of their courses have previously been approved, so it becomes standard, and students are not questioned. The goal is to work with DOE and streamline the process. An example document will be drafted for approval by the DOE.

Another area discussed was that EPPs create programs specifically designed to meet certification standards within high need areas, which could lead to a new pathway.

Other Business:

- Penny Bishop submitted an Earmark to look at strengthening Maine's rural educator workforce.
- UMaine System has created a Special Education network, across all campuses offering undergraduate special education courses, to create a website for people seeking certification to see which courses are online and in which semester. This will also be done at the graduate level.
- UMF received grant funding from Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan Small Campus Initiative that looks at what makes being a teacher educator satisfying. 200 responses were received to the study. Working in an environment with a lot of respect for educators was a critical item identified.
- UMF is writing another grant to address resilience in the undergraduate population.

The next regular Certification Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 10:30 AM.

Adjournment:

The April 26, 2023, Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting adjourned at 12:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Bourget, Office Specialist
Maine State Board of Education