



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the January 30, 2026 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met in Room 500, Cross Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta and remotely via Zoom.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins, Chair, Paulette Bonneau (remote), and Edmond Morin

OTHERS PRESENT:

Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities, Department of Education

Mary Becker, Interim Office Specialist, State Board of Education

Laura M. Cyr, Federal and State Legislative Specialist, Department of Education (remote)

Chair Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Motioned by Bonneau, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the December 10, 2025 meeting minutes as written.

Motioned by Bonneau, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the December 18, 2025 special meeting minutes as written.

Chair Desjardins introduced the first item on the agenda, Review and Discussion of the Governor's Commission on School Construction Final Report. She stated that Chair Landry is still receiving comments on the draft report and there is no date set for the release of the final report. She will continue to forward future drafts she receives to committee members.

Desjardins then moved to the agenda item, Drafting Amendments to Chapter 61: State Board of Education Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects. She summarized her plans for drafting amendments to Rule Chapter 61 and inviting others with financial and experience-based knowledge of school facilities to future committee meetings. A copy of *Possible Schedule for Chapter 61 (MS) Rulemaking* was distributed and Desjardins asked Dr. Laura Cyr to review the timeline on the schedule.

Cyr reviewed the tentative timeline, answered questions from committee members, and offered her services throughout the process. She stressed important dates to keep in mind in order to meet the Legislative Acceptance Date of January 8, 2027 for the 133rd Maine Legislature.

By consensus, committee members agreed to dedicate time for this work in every regular School Construction Committee meeting from February 27 to June 26, 2026 and to hold special meetings, if needed. They also agreed to invite the following subject matter experts to future committee meetings: Scott Brown, Valerie Chiang, Ann Pinnette, Ruey Yehle, Ted Hall, Lyndon Keck, and Paula Gravelle.

In preparation for the first meeting on February 27, Desjardins asked that they review Sections 1-3 of Chapter 61 and be ready to propose amendments for discussion.

Desjardins thanked Dr. Cyr for her virtual attendance and presentation.

Chair Desjardins moved to the next item on the agenda, Amendments – L.D. 1892 An Act to Establish Procedures for School Construction Projects, sponsored by Rep. Michael Brennan. Committee members discussed the four proposed amendments: Revolving Loan and Renovation Program, Major School Construction Program, Cost Sharing, and the Accelerator Program, along with Rep. Brennan’s note that Section 7 of the bill “may be eliminated or turned into a study.” Committee members expressed much support for the amendments. It was noted that the amendments focus on some of the issues that were identified in the MEPRI report, *Summary of Maine School Building Inventory Data*, that nearly half of the schools surveyed had mold and air quality concerns.

Chair Desjardins moved to the next item on the agenda, School Construction Bills in the Legislature. She brought up two bills that had been carried over on June 25, 2025:

L.D. 363 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the School Capital Improvement Fund

L.D. 826 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund

Dr. Cyr stated that both bills are on the table in the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. There has been no action taken since they were carried over.

By consensus, Committee members agreed to move the April 24, 2026 meeting to Friday, May 1 because of the School Break in April.

Desjardins adjourned the meeting at 9:58 a.m.