



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the September 5, 2025 Meeting

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

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities, Department of Education

Valerie Chiang, Senior Construction Coordinator, Department of Education

Lisa Sawin, Architect, Harriman

Heather Manchester, Superintendent of Schools, MSAD 17/RSU 17

Chair Desjardins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Motioned by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the August 5, 2025 minutes as written.

Chair Desjardins introduced the first item on the agenda, Major Capital School Construction Program; Concept Approval Consideration; MSAD 17/RSU 17 - New Middle School and asked Director Scott Brown to provide background information for the Committee. Mr. Brown reminded the Committee of the recent site approval and then reviewed the thorough programming and budgeting processes the project has gone through. He also stated that the project has been designed to meet the Department's school construction standards and is ready to move forward for a district referendum.

Superintendent Manchester began her presentation by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to present the project for approval and that the district is grateful for the State Board's support of their project. She provided a brief update including the recent straw poll results (96 in favor, 2 opposed) and the Building Committee's decision to have three referendum questions. She then reviewed some of the major design elements of the building including the heating and cooling systems and stated the great public support the project has throughout the district. After reviewing the floor plans, elevations, and budget in detail, Superintendent Manchester answered several questions from the Committee including staff input, CTE opportunities, and the process of selecting an energy system.

After further Committee discussion it was moved by Morin, seconded by Bonneau, and voted unanimously by those present that pursuant to Title 20-A M.R.S. §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, that this exhibit be placed on the September 10, 2025 State Board meeting agenda and the State Board grant Concept Approval to MSAD 17/RSU 17 for a new grades 6-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

Under the Miscellaneous agenda item, Chair Desjardins reviewed agenda items and developments from the Governor's Commission on School Construction since the last Committee meeting on August 5, 2025 including meeting topics from the smaller breakout meetings. She stated that the final report is still due in December. The Committee then discussed the possibility and potential timelines of revisions to Rule Chapter 61 and they agreed to review further in future meetings this fall.

Chair Desjardins asked Mr. Brown to update the Committee on the status of the Proposed Priority List. Mr. Brown noted that the Commissioner's Office was still working on the request for an Administrative Review and that the timeline to file had closed. He informed the Committee that he would provide an update at the Committees next meeting.

Chair Desjardins adjourned the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

The next Committee meeting will be on Friday, September 26, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.