

State of Maine
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Presentation of Fern Desjardins, Chair of the State Board of Education
Wendy Ault, Chair of the Certification & Higher Education Committee, State Board of Education

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Date: September 14, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Fern Desjardins, Chair of the State Board of Education as of July 1, and with me is Wendy Ault, Chair of the Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board.

Thank you for inviting us to provide you with an update on the proposed changes to Rule Chapter 115: The Credentialing of Education Personnel.

After a May 2020 convening of a consensus-based rulemaking committee which met for seven months, a review by the Professional Standards Board which resulted in their support of the recommendations of the consensus-based committee, and additionally, a comprehensive review by the State Board of Education's Certification and Higher Education Committee from October 2020 to August 2021, a proposed Rule Chapter 115 went to a public hearing on August 16, 2021. The rule has substantial changes, which we believe will positively benefit the educator workforce in Maine.

As you know, some of these proposals necessitated changes in statute first and were included in LD 1189, which was enacted in the House on June 9, 2021 and in the Senate on June 10, 2021. The Governor signed the emergency measure into Public Law 2021, Chapter 228 on June 16, 2021. The Law states "Rulemaking; applicability. The State Board of Education shall amend Department of Education rule Chapter 115 regarding the credentialing of education personnel in accordance with this Act."

After the public hearing on August 16, 2021, the proposed Rule Chapter 115 is now in the comment period which will end tomorrow, September 15. The Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Education is meeting this Friday, September 17 to review the comments received both during the comment period and the hearing. Depending on the comments received, it is possible that further changes would be made to the proposal and another hearing and comment period would take place by the end of December 2021. After a review of form and legality by the Assistant Attorney General, and then provisional adoption by the State Board of Education, the rule will be submitted to Legislative Council for referral to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs for its consideration. Final adoption would be made by the State Board of Education.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with an update on the progress of Chapter 115 Rulemaking.