

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
WILSON G. HESS, CHAIR  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
And the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Hearing Date: February 22, 2021

**LD 221 “An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023.”**

Senators Breen and Daughtry, Representatives Pierce and Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Wilson G. Hess and I am the chair of the State Board of Education. I am here today to present testimony on the biennial budget for the board.

The State Board of Education is authorized to act in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education in matters concerning state laws relating to education. In addition, the Board is delegated specific powers to make recommendations to the Legislature for the efficient conduct of the public schools; to approve the formation of School Administrative Districts; to approve the formation of Community School Districts; to grant permission for administrative units to enter into agreements for cooperative educational purposes; to act upon articles of agreement for creation of an Interstate School District; to develop and adopt a plan for the establishment of career and technical education centers; to approve standards for school construction; to approve school construction projects for State aid (which total approximately \$175M annually); to work as a partner with the Department of Education regarding the Essential Programs and Services school finance process; to obtain information regarding applications for granting degrees; to accredit programs at institutions of higher education that train educators; to

set the standards for educator's certification, authorization, and approval; to approve applications for out-of-state institutions who wish to offer degree granting programs in Maine; to review the applications for initial degree granting and make recommendations to the Legislature; participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) through the New England Board of Higher Education; serves as the State agency for administering Carl Perkins Federal funds (currently totaling approximately \$7.047M); reviews student transfers requested by a parent or superintendent dissatisfied with the decision of the Commissioner of Education.

The State Board of Education also appoints three members to the Maine State Charter School Commission and interviews and approves the four members at large. As part of its ongoing activities, the Board monitors the work of the Commission and reviews its annual monitoring reports of authorized charter schools.

The **baseline budget** may be found on page **A-183** in the Budget Document. The General Fund request is \$162,006 in FY22 and \$162,681 in FY23. The board has no budget initiatives.

This concludes my testimony for the State Board of Education. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.