

## Newsletter for May 2025

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### *MeASBO seeking Executive Director by June 30, 2025*

As many of you know, MeASBO has an opening for an Executive Director. If you, or someone you know, is ready for an opportunity to work fewer hours, enjoy work more, and grow an organization, this position is for you/them. Details of the position and how to apply are available on our [website](#) under "Recent News" or, via email to <mailto:maineasbo@gmail.com>

### *Trane Lunch N' Learn Recap*

Mark Power from Trane presented information and strategies for the "Climate of the Future" during our Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> Lunch N' Learn. This was an extremely informative presentation; you will want to check out the recording and Mark's slide deck on our website under "Member Center > Meeting Archives". As a follow up to this session, please see Trane's article on page Thank you, Mark and Perri, for taking the time to provide this information.

## Siemens Vendor Spotlight Recap

On Thursday, May 15 at 1:00 pm, Arthur Woolverton of [Siemens](#) presented: “Mastering Facility Management in a Changing World-Trends, Challenges and Solutions to Keep You Ahead”

Maine's schools face significant challenges with aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and labor shortages; rising energy costs and inefficient buildings exacerbate the situation. This Siemens webinar discussed possible solutions like smart infrastructure, energy savings performance contracts, and comprehensive facility management to improve energy efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance educational outcomes. Stop by the Siemens booth at Tristate ASBO or reach out to [Arthur](#) to learn more.

## Regional Groups

As a supplement to our regular quarterly meetings and Lunch N' Learns, MeASBO is supporting regional groups in an effort to help ensure that individual region professional development needs are met. Three regional groups are currently collaborating and scheduling meetings, in Midcoast, Penquis, and Western Maine.

The **Midcoast Regional Group** is lead by [Peter Nielsen](#) of AOS 93.

The **Penquis Regional Group** has an upcoming meetings on May 30 at United Technologies Center in Bangor, from 9:00 AM to 12 PM. For more information regarding the Penquis meetings, reach out to [Barbara Grindle](#), RSU 34.

The **Western Maine Regional Group**, is led by [Jennifer Pooler](#), RSU 58. Please reach out to [Jennifer](#) for more information if you would like to participate in this meeting.

If you are unsure to which region your school unit belongs, reach out to [Joanne](#). If you feel there's a need more focused networking and professional development in your area, opportunities for regional coordinators are currently available in Aroostook, Washington, Cumberland, and York regions. If you are interested in coordinating your region or, would like to partner with another region, please reach out to [Joanne](#) for ideas and information.

## AptaFund Software User Group

A number of schools have migrated or are in the process of migrating to **AptaFund**. A support group for users is up and running with meetings every two or three weeks - generally on a Wednesday at 10 AM. The group meets via Zoom for about an hour each meeting. If you are interested in joining the group, please email Sherry Moody at: [smoody@mcst8.org](mailto:smoody@mcst8.org)

## *Looking for more professional development?*

For members enrolled in our Certification program or, for members seeking to maintain other professional accreditation/certification, course offerings beyond MeASBO are often necessary. Below are some suggested resources that may assist you in fulfilling requirements:

<https://www.wested.org/event/wested-2025-finance-training-for-seas-and-leas/>

<https://www.gfoa.org/>

<https://asbointl.org/>

## *Optimal Learning Environments to Ensure Student Success*

*By Mark Power, Trane Energy Services Team Leader, Westbrook, Maine*

Learning environments play a critical role in academic outcomes for students. This article will share with you how we at [Trane®](#) are creating thoughtful, energy-efficient, cost-saving solutions designed to optimize the classroom environment ensuring success for our students.

School districts and administrators across Maine balance competing priorities daily—providing high-quality education while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Among the most pressing challenges is ensuring school buildings are safe, healthy, and efficient learning environments, all while managing limited resources.

A recent report from the Governor's Commission highlights the severity of the issue: Maine faces an \$11 billion need to replace or repair aging school infrastructure. <sup>1</sup>Most schools require significant upgrades, and with a 10-year backlog of requests at the Maine Department of Education, the gap between need and funding continues to grow. These conditions not only strain budgets but also directly affect the physical and academic well-being of students.

Fortunately, school districts have access to innovative funding mechanisms that can address these infrastructure needs without relying solely on traditional capital budgets. For example, Title 20-A of Maine state law enables schools to partner with Qualified Energy Services Companies. Through these partnerships, districts can finance improvements by leveraging guaranteed energy savings. Combined with utility incentives, grants, and operational efficiencies, schools can modernize facilities in a financially sustainable way.

One strategic focus within these projects is decarbonization—the process of reducing carbon emissions from school operations. Two major pathways are energy efficiency and electrification. By upgrading to technologies like heat pumps, schools can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and improve indoor climate control.

Heat pumps are particularly well-suited for Maine's climate and aging school buildings. They function year-round by extracting heat from the air or ground for warmth in the winter and

reversing that cycle to provide cooling in summer. Their adoption brings several benefits to schools:

- Lower energy consumption and utility costs
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved classroom comfort and quieter operation
- Access to rebates and incentives for displacing outdated heating systems
- Backup heating capability for resilience during extreme weather
- Alignment with Maine's statewide environmental and energy goals

For school business officials, investing in energy-efficient infrastructure is not just about cost savings—it's about creating optimal conditions for student learning. Better air quality, stable temperatures, and quieter classrooms contribute to better focus, attendance, and academic performance.

Now is a pivotal time to explore these solutions. By modernizing building systems with a focus on sustainability and student success, schools can meet today's demands and prepare for the future.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about how energy-efficient upgrades can improve learning environments in your district, contact Mark Power, expert in K-12 School Energy Projects, at <mailto:mpower@trane.com>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/facilities/commission-on-school-construction>

## *State Legislative Update*

It would appear, for the most part, that legislative committees have wrapped up public hearings and work sessions on bills before them. The Appropriations Committee still has work to do and a handful of bills are still being printed but, the majority have been voted out of their respective committees.

For bills receiving unanimous support in committee or, divided reports (for example, majority votes of ought to pass vs minority of ought not to pass), those bills will go before the full legislature for vote.

The status of bills of interest to MeASBO members is posted on [our website](#) under "Recent News > 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature". You may also check the status of any bill on the [legislative website](#). As always, if you have questions or need additional information, please reach out to <mailto:maineasbo@gmail.com>

## 2025-2026 Membership Update

Just a reminder that the MeASBO Board approved an annual membership dues increase of 5% for all membership types. This will equal \$262 and \$525, respectively, for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Vendor memberships for next year will be \$630.

Need a refresher of all of the benefits available to you as a member? Go to our website, choose “Join or Renew Your Membership” under the “Quick Links” heading.

Members will be able to download their renewal invoice from our [website](#) in July; instructions will be provided via the June newsletter and list serve communications regarding that process. If anyone is interested in paying their 2025-2026 membership dues invoice prior to July 1, please reach out to [Joanne](#).

To ensure that invoices are accurate when generated by our system, please reach out to [Joanne](#) by May 30 if you wish to change your membership type (individual vs district) or, if you or someone on your membership is retiring and you wish to have a new team member added as a replacement.

## News and Upcoming Events from Our Partners

### ASBO International

A recent School Business Insider podcast of interest: [Navigating Financial Challenges in Special Education](#)

### Federal FY 2026 Budget proposal for K-12 education:

*The budget assumes USED will continue to exist, but proposes to cut USED by \$12.4 billion (or -15%) to a total of \$66.7 billion.*

*It proposes consolidating all IDEA programs into one special education formula grant, flat-funded at FY25 levels. It recommends creating a new “Special Education Simplified Funding Program” designed to empower parents to direct these funds while keeping IDEA law in place.*

*It maintains Title I funding, except for migrant education programs. The budget proposes “preserving full funding for Title I” but also eliminating two Title I programs: -\$376 million for migrant education state grants and -\$54 million for special programs for migrant students (HEP/CAMP).*

*It would consolidate 18 other K-12 education programs into a new \$2 billion formula grant that would represent a -\$4.5 billion (-66%) cut. The budget doesn’t specify which programs would be consolidated, what the new formula would be, or direct where to fund specific priorities. The proposal says the new simplified program “requires fewer Federal staff and empowers States and districts to make spending decisions based on their needs, consistent with the recent reduction in workforce and Executive Orders. The new approach allows States and districts to focus on the core subjects—math, reading, science, and history.*

*Charter school grants increase.*

*Funding eliminated proposal:* This includes funding for migrant students, English Language Acquisition Grants (Title III), adult education, and several higher education student aid programs (including -\$70 million for Teacher Quality Partnerships).

*USED's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) reduced by -\$49 million (-35%).* OCR would continue ensuring that schools and other entities that receiving federal aid for education programs and activities comply with Federal civil rights law.

For other programs that may be of interest outside of USED:

- *Preschool Programs:* Eliminates HHS' \$315 million Preschool Development Grants.
- *Medicare/Medicaid:* Would cut Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Program Management by -\$674 million, but it would not have any impact on providing Medicaid and Medicaid benefits to beneficiaries.
- *USDA:* No proposals impacting school meal programs were included in the skinny budget.

## *Maine Department of Education*

### Child Nutrition

Thursday, May 22, 1:30 PM "Annual Financial Report" Webinar - this webinar will include updates on the Annual Financial report that must be completed by September 1, 2025. Please send any questions you have regarding the Annual Financial Report to [jodi.truman@maine.gov](mailto:jodi.truman@maine.gov) by May 15, 2025. All questions submitted will be addressed in the webinar.

To register, visit the [MDOE calendar of events](#).

### Data Management

#### *Data Warehouse*

The Maine DOE Data Warehouse provides data about Maine's students, education staff, schools, and SAUs in one location. This data can be filtered in multiple ways for comparisons across the state, SAUs, and schools, as well as changes over time. The data collected by the Maine DOE are based on the requirements from state and federal statutes.

[Visit the Data Warehouse here](#)

#### *Summer Data Training*

Mark your calendars! Registration for the Maine Department of Education (DOE) Summer Data Training is now open. Dates are scheduled throughout the state during July and August; additional information and registration is available [here](#).

## Federal Fiscal Programs Updates to Federal Fiscal Office Hours:

To ensure office hours remain purposeful and meaningful; the team is transitioning to quarterly office hours. The remaining calendar year 2025 dates are July 24, 2025 and October 23, 2025, beginning at 10:00 AM. Previous registrations for any of these dates remain valid so there is no need to re-register. If you haven't registered, you may do so [here](#).

## School Facilities

The Governor's Commission on School Construction began meeting in November, 2024. Please see this [website](#) to review discussions to date, view the meeting schedule, submit a comment for consideration by the Commission, and much more information. MeASBO's representative on the Commission is Hollis Cobb, Business Manager for the Gorham School Department. Reach out to [Hollis](#) if you would like more specific information that is not readily available on the website.

Monday, June 2, 1:00 PM – Virtual Office Hours for school units completing the “Integrated, Consolidated Educational Facility” application. Access the event via the [MDOE Calendar of Events](#). Additional dates for those working on this application are Monday, July 7, Monday, August 4, Monday, September 8, and Monday, October 6.

## School Finance

Upcoming School Finance office hours are scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, Tuesday, June 17, Tuesday, July 15, and Tuesday, August 19 at 10:00 AM. You may access the session via the [MDOE Calendar](#). Additional school finance office hour dates are Tuesday, September 16, and Tuesday, October 21.



[New state summary outlines scope of Maine's \\$11 billion school infrastructure crisis](#) – Fox 23 News

[New Report Finds Maine Will Need \\$11B to Replace, Repair Aging Schools](#) – Construction Equipment Guide

[Justice Department: Maine Education Department at risk of losing \\$864M](#) – K-12 Dive

[Maine's K-12 is on the brink of losing federal funding. How did it get here?](#) – K-12 Dive

[FY26 Federal budget would slash more than \\$4.5B from K-12](#) – K-12 Dive

[PowerSchool data breach leads to school extortion attempts](#) – K-12 Dive

[Survey: Electric School Buses Can Help Students' Mental Health](#) – School Bus Fleet





### *The Tri State Committee has two vacancies!*

Would you like to help organize and execute this annual event? Maine needs to add two members to the Tri State Committee. This is a great opportunity to network with peers from not only your home state but New Hampshire and Vermont as well. If you'd like more information, reach out to [Joanne](#) and she will connect you with a current committee member for more details.

### *Fall Law Conference with Drummond Woodsum*

MeASBO will once again partner with Drummond Woodsum for a fall law conference. The details are being sorted at this time for date and location. As soon as we know, you will know! Watch future newsletters, the [website](#) calendar, and the list serve for details.