



## Newsletter for January 2024

### What's new



### Notes from your Executive Director, Joanne Allen

#### *Upcoming Meetings and Professional Development Opportunities*

MeASBO is on “winter hiatus” from in person meetings. Our in person meetings will resume on March 1 when we will be hosted by the MidCoast School of Technology in Rockland. Our agenda will include “How to Prepare for Your Audit” presented by the RHR Smith team and, an Accounting Handbook presentation from Ida Batista, MDOE. Our breakfast sponsor will be Competitive Energy Services (CES). For those of you who did not have a chance to interact with CES during our November meeting, CES offers a broad variety of strategic energy management services including commodity procurement, renewables, cogeneration, multi-fuel strategies, demand management, and sustainable services. CES will be providing an educational presentation during the meeting and will be available for the duration of our meeting to answer your questions.

To provide members with educational opportunities in lieu of our in person meetings, MeASBO is hosting “Lunch and Learn” webinars. 22 members joined our January 24<sup>th</sup> “Lunch and Learn” to listen to Ida Batista of MDOE providing an overview of the CTE Funding Model. Unfortunately, technology was uncooperative and the session was not recorded but, Ida’s presentation slides were very thorough and are available on our website under “Member Center >Meeting Archives”. Our February Lunch N’ Learn session will feature a fraud prevention workshop with Androscoggin Bank. For this event, Androscoggin Bank has requested a head count **by February 6** so please reach out to [me](#) if you plan to attend this virtual event. Zoom sign in information will be sent to those who RSVP.

Please check the calendar on the [MeASBO website](#) to see additional professional development opportunities; we have many listings from other state agencies and organizations that are hosting opportunities over the winter months. And don’t forget

to mark your calendar for the [Tri-State conference in Portland, Maine](#), from May 22nd through May 24th – Maine is the host state this year and we look forward to seeing all of our Maine members there!

## *Legislative Update*

The second session of the 131<sup>st</sup> legislature is in full swing with public hearings and work sessions. [Joanne](#) is analyzing bills of interest to MeASBO members and posting those analyses, with the public hearing and work session date, on our [website's](#) “Member Center”, under the “Legislative Information” menu. Those postings will be announced via a Forum message. If you see a bill that you are passionate about, submit testimony or contact your Legislator (list of legislators by member available under the “Legislative Information” menu of our website). Remember, as a 501(c)3, MeASBO cannot take a position on a bill for the organization however, [Joanne](#) can assist you with the most effective way to submit information to your legislator on behalf of *your* SAU.

The bill below is scheduled for public hearing on February 1 at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Committee. Some questions for MeASBO members to consider 1) If enacted, will this language result in a higher unit cost for a bus and 2) Will the State bid price, which is a factor in determining school bus subsidy, increase to include this requirement?

[LD 2116](#) - An Act to Require Flame-retardant Seats on School Buses Manufactured after 2024

[LD 1402](#) - An Act to Provide an Additional Allocation in the School Funding Formula to Cover Tax-exempt Property or a Large Economically Disadvantaged Student Population – is in the process of being amended to state that any unobligated balances in the GPA account would be redistributed between the Revolving Renovation Fund and school administrative units. There are still lots of questions regarding the redistribution to school units (for example, would that redistribution be through the school funding formula?) and the proposed amendment will be discussed again by the Education Committee during a work session on Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.

If you wish to listen to the discussion on either of these bills, links to Legislative Committee live streams may be found [here](#).

[LD 1160, Resolve 2023, Chapter 118 Directing the Department of Education to Analyze Data on the Essential Programs and Services Funding Formula and Allocation Methodology](#)

MDOE has completed the work directed by Resolve 2023, Chapter 118 to analyze the EPS model and the distribution methodology for state subsidy. The Department has submitted its final report to the Education Committee and it is available [here](#), as well

as under the “Member Center>Legislative Information” tab of our website. The report provides a good history of the EPS model, as well as a history of studies completed and recommendations made since the adoption of the model. Based on the MDOE presentation of this report to the Education Committee, more discussion is anticipated as the Education Committee appears interested to make some changes to the model sooner, rather than waiting for another study, as recommended in the report.

### Task Force to Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System

The task force has completed its work and authored its final report. The full report is available [here](#) and makes the following recommendations:

**Recommendation #1.** Support the ongoing work of CTE centers and regions and their respective governing or affiliated SAUs in developing equivalency agreements for credit gained through a CTE program to be accepted as core credit toward a high school diploma as required by Public Law 2023, chapter 247 (LD 436). Support should include periodic updates on the progress to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs to determine when and where additional resources, financial or otherwise, may be needed.

**Recommendation #2.** Support the State’s existing 27 CTE centers and regions to increase capacity, grow programs, increase exposure to CTE programs (especially for 9th and 10th grade students), and require the data collection necessary to capture the true scope of needed resources to address barriers.

**Recommendation #3.** Explore ways to increase capacity at CTE centers and regions specifically for oversubscribed programs.

The report will be forwarded to the Legislature’s Education Committee for consideration of formal action on these recommendations.

### Paid Family and Medical Leave law update

As directed by the law, the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) will begin formal rulemaking in early in 2024 on the Paid Family and Medical Leave law enacted during the first session of the 13st Legislature. Public comment is an integral part of the rulemaking process and is an opportunity for school units to bring to light the costs to their district, additional workload, and other concerns. Due to its 501(c)3 status, MeASBO cannot take an organizational position on this law. Therefore, for members wishing to submit public comment, rulemaking information will be posted to the MeASBO “Member Center/Legislative Information” link, as well as the calendar on our website, as it becomes available.

In advance of the rulemaking process, MDOL will be hosting listening sessions in regard to this law as follows:

- February 1, 2024 from 5:30pm-7pm – this listening session will focus on eligibility. Attendees will be allowed to comment during the session. A separate message with details of this session was sent to MeASBO members on January 19.
- February 12, 2024 from 5:30pm-7pm
- February 28, 2024 from 5:30pm-7pm

Registration for these sessions is available [here](#). Once you register, you will be sent, via email, an “Eventbrite ticket” for the event, which will include the Zoom link.

For those who would like to read the full text of the law, it begins on page 319 of [this document](#).

## **News and Upcoming Events from Our Partners**



*Maine Department of Education*

[Maine Clean School Bus Program](#) – applications due February 14, 2024

[Maine Care in Education Bootcamp](#) – to register for one of these hybrid events, go to the [MDOE Event Calendar](#)

Feb 9, 2024 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Feb 16, 2024 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

[Federal Fiscal Programs Office Hours](#) – to register, go to the [MDOE Event Calendar](#)

Feb 29, 2024 10:00 AM

Mar 28, 2024 10:00 AM

[Preliminary ED 279s for FY 2024-2025](#)

As many of you already know, the FY 2024-2025 preliminary ED 279s are available on the "FY 2024-25 Funding Details" webpage below:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/gpa/eps/24-25>

Also, within that link, you will find many helpful documents to assist you in analyzing your school unit's changes in subsidy from this year's current amount to next year's projected amount.

Take some time to verify your data points; for example:

- 1) Do changes to your pupil counts seem accurate?
- 2) Do you have a gifted and talented program? If so, did you receive subsidy allocation for that?
- 3) Do changes to your special education and transportation allocations seem accurate?
- 4) Check your approved bus purchase/payment allocation; if you are approved to purchase a bus in the **current** fiscal year (2023-2024) and you are not going to make that purchase, contact MDOE ASAP in order to have your 2024-2025 allocation adjusted accordingly.

Please review the document at the link below for additional guidance in reviewing your ED 279:

[https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Analyzing%20changes%20to%20your%20ED%20279\\_JAEdits.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Analyzing%20changes%20to%20your%20ED%20279_JAEdits.pdf)

There are also some helpful notes regarding changes for many school units contained in the "FY 25 GPA Allocation Comparison of FY 24 to FY 25 Preliminary" spreadsheet on the ["FY 2024-25 Funding Details page"](#).

Should you discover an error in your ED 279, below is the statement from MDOE regarding the error resolution process:

**Absolute Latest Date to Review and Notify DOE of Errors in Preliminary ED 279s**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> or 30 days after Original Posting**

(Any questions or errors on the posted preliminary ED 279s must be identified and reported to the Maine DOE School Finance Team within 30 days of the posting of the preliminary ED 279s. This does not guarantee a correction can or will be made; however, it allows for the correction in a timely manner if funding is available.)

## *New Hampshire Association of School Business Officials*

The Northern New England Facility Masters Conference will be returning to Portsmouth New Hampshire High School on February 28 and 29, 2024 to once again offer professional development opportunities for school facility managers and staff. Registration is available at this [link](#). The schedule of presentations is available on our [website](#), under “Member Center” > “Professional Development and Training Links”

### *News Clippings of Interest*

[The ESSER Funding Cliff: Sustaining IT Upgrades After 2024](#) (of interest is the discussion regarding asset management/tracking)

[DOL proposes \\$55K overtime rule threshold, automatic 3-year updates](#)

[DOL independent contractor final rule announced, will take effect March 11](#)

*Last but not least.....*



### *MeASBO Website*

Can't find your newsletter? Want to refresh your memory on a topic presented at one of our meetings? Do you need school finance information and/or legislative updates? It's all available on our website.

A new posting to the website this month is a sample rider for contracts using Federal funds, created by Tyler Backus of RHR Smith and Company. Tyler created this rider for use when utilizing federal funds to cover the costs of contracts, and when sub-granting funds, as there are multiple conditions that might need to be included to ensure compliance with 2 CFR Part 200. You can either include the document as a whole in every contract, or include the individual contract provisions if they pertain to the individual contract. You will find the document under “Member Center>Shared Documents>Sample Forms”. Tyler will be on hand at our March meeting, if you have questions or need clarification on the document.

### *MeASBO List Serve and Forums*

The MeASBO List Serve has been reactivated and a test message sent to all members on Tuesday, January 23. If you did not receive the message, please check your “spam” folder and if it's not there and you wish to participate in the list serve, please reach out

to [Joanne](#). Also, if you did receive a message and do not wish to participate in the list serve, please reach out to [Joanne](#). The address to submit correspondence to the list serve is: [measbolistserv@measbo.memberclicks.net](mailto:measbolistserv@measbo.memberclicks.net)

If you are a vendor member, remember that there is a forum board specifically for you. This allows you to support our members through providing educational information, and continue to build positive, supportive relationships with our members. The forum is moderated by MeASBO leadership to maintain the goals and objectives of the forum board.