

Newsletter for April 2025

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MeASBO wants you!

As you know, MeASBO has an upcoming opening for an Executive Director. If you, or someone you know, is ready for a career shift to an opportunity to work less, 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>

Have you registered for Tri State?



Tri State May 21-23, 2025 Details of the 33^rd annual Tri State Conference to be held in Whitefield, New Hampshire are finalized. Registration, program, and other information can be found at: <https://www.tristateasbo.org/>

*Tri-State Association
of School Business Officials*

April 4 Meeting Recap

Over 60 members attended the April 4 meeting at Keeley's Banquet Center in Portland. Thank you to our breakfast sponsor, TD Bank. Members had an opportunity to visit with Katherine Heck of TD Bank at her information table, as well as Perri Boles of Trane, and Tyler Backus and Alyssa Kenney of RHR Smith. Thank you, Sherry Moody, for these photos!



This was our Association's Annual Meeting, as required in our by-laws. Three Board member seats were filled to serve three year terms, beginning July 1, 2025, by Zak Harding, Sherry Moody, and Colin Walsh. Association officers are voted by the Board of Directors; that vote will take place at the Board retreat in June.



Our current Board President, Colin Walsh, presented the Dave Holden award to Jackie Smith of the Lewiston School Department. Jackie received several nominations for this award; each testimonial referenced Jackie's willingness to support other school business professionals, as well as her contributions to this organization. Congratulations to Jackie on this well deserved recognition!

A recording of the meeting, as well as copies of the presentations by Tyler Backus of RHR Smith, and the MDOE School Finance Team are available on our [website](#) under Member Center > Meeting Archives. Thank you to our presenters and to all members who attended this last in person meeting of the school year.

Lunch N' Learns

Members of MDOE's School Safety Team presented "Cost Considerations Before, During, and After a School Emergency" on March 19th. The meeting recording and supporting documents are available on our [website](#) under "Member Center" > "Meeting Archives. You will need to be signed into your Zoom account to access the recording.

Our next Lunch N' Learn is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7th at noon. Trane will ask you if you are prepared for the climate of the future. Join the presentation at this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87012012173?pwd=4ZDH8wza9We0MgKCbpTCekaDscp0rb.1>

Upcoming Vendor Spotlight

On Thursday, May 15 at 1:00 pm, Siemens presents: “Mastering Facility Management In a Changing World-Trends, Challenges and Solutions to Keep You Ahead”

In summary: As educators, we understand the critical role that the learning environment plays in supporting student success and teacher effectiveness. However, many school districts face significant challenges when it comes to managing their facilities, including budget constraints, increasing deferred maintenance, and a lack of actionable information to make informed decisions. To address these issues, we are excited to invite you to an upcoming webinar that will provide an overview of the key trends and challenges impacting school facilities. The webinar will also explore solutions aimed at helping districts optimize their resources and make the right decisions for their buildings and grounds.

As one superintendent recently noted, "I'm an Educator, not an Engineer." This webinar is designed to bridge that gap, empowering educators with the knowledge and tools they need to effectively manage their school facilities, even without an engineering background.

Did you know:

- ✓ A study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that schools with high levels of deferred maintenance had 12-15% lower student test scores
- ✓ Researchers at the 21st Century School Fund determined that schools deferring maintenance were 20% more likely to have poor indoor air quality, leading to higher rates of student and teacher absenteeism due to health issues
- ✓ A report by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that teachers in schools with significant deferred maintenance were 18% more likely to report job dissatisfaction and burnout, negatively impacting student learning.
- ✓ Researchers at the University of Tulsa determined that students in classrooms with higher levels of illumination (500-600 lux) scored 7-12% higher on standardized tests than students in classrooms with lower light levels (300-400 lux).
- ✓ A study by the National Center for Education Statistics showed that students in schools built before 1960 had 12% higher rates of absenteeism compared to students in schools built after 1990, likely due to poorer building conditions and environmental factors.

We encourage all school leaders, facilities managers, and interested stakeholders to attend this informative session:

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 397 247 796 515

Passcode: 4ge3Yg99

Dial in by phone

[+1 323-457-5927,,753745507#](#) United States, Los Angeles

Phone conference ID: 753 745 507#

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. Two regional groups are currently collaborating and scheduling meetings, in Penquis, and Western Maine. **Midcoast** has a new team leader; [Peter Nielsen](#) of AOS 93 will be coordinating meetings for this group – thank you, Peter! Kennebec and Hancock do have team leads but region members have not been able to organize this year; hopefully, next year!

The **Penquis Regional Group** has an upcoming meetings on May 30 at United Technolgies 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

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/>

State Legislative Update

A FY 2025-2026/2026-2027 operational budget was approved by a simple majority on the legislature on March 21, 2025. Despite the legislative adjournment, the Governor called the legislature back into session to finish their work on pending bills. A list of bills that would be of interest to MeASBO members is posted under the “Recent News” section of our [website](#); this list is updated at least weekly. If you have not had an opportunity to do so, please review [LD 1400](#), “An Act to Exempt Certain Public School Districts and Their Employees From the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program”, as well as [LD 1518](#), “An Act to Clarify the Amount and Use of Unallocated Balances in a SAU Budget”.

Remember, due to our 501©3 status, MeASBO is unable to advocate on legislation however, if you would like to submit testimony but feel unsure about how to communicate to a legislative committee, reach out to [Joanne](#) for tips and tricks.

If you are aware of a bill that you feel would be of interest to MeASBO members but hasn’t been included on this list, please reach out to [Joanne](#).

Also, MEPRI is periodically briefing the Education Committee regarding the status of their work on the legislatively required EPS Funding Study. Preliminary reports are available on the [MEPRI website](#).

2025-2026 Membership Update

As many school unit members are in the process of creating budgets for next fiscal year, MeASBO’s Board of Directors met to discuss next year’s school unit membership dues and has approved an annual membership dues increase of 5% for individual school unit memberships and district memberships. This will equal \$262 and \$525, respectively, for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Vendor memberships for next year have not undergone Board review at this time; an update will be provided to vendor members as soon as that review has taken place.

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.

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

ASBO International is collaborating with the Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition (BASIC) to host a webinar, "[Energy Tax Credits for Schools, on April 25, 1:00-2:00 PM ET](#)", to provide the latest updates on federal energy tax credits for financing school infrastructure projects.

[Register to attend](#) and discover how school districts across the country are tapping into federal energy tax credits to modernize their facilities, lower energy costs, and improve the quality of indoor environments. Learn from district case studies in Kentucky and Missouri about how performance contracting and energy tax credits can help schools tackle deferred maintenance in existing buildings.

The session will also provide a federal update regarding this funding opportunity as Congress works on budget reconciliation and will highlight opportunities to advocate for school infrastructure funding.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Check out *School Business Insider's* podcast release: [How Medicaid Supports our Schools](#)

Federal Updates:

Impact of Executive Order to Dismantle USDOE - The Executive Order (EO), entitled, "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities," asserts that federal programs and dollars have failed our nation's children, teachers, and families and that closing USED would "provide children and their families the opportunity to escape a system that is failing them." It claims USED's main functions can, and should be, returned to the states.

Executive orders are not law, they cannot create new laws; they are constrained by existing law. As always, districts should consult with their legal counsel to determine how to comply with current law and navigate potential changes in the future.

Section 2 of the EO reads:

- (a) The Secretary of Education shall, to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law, take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education and return authority over education to the States and local communities while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely.
- (b) Consistent with the Department of Education's authorities, the Secretary of Education shall ensure that the allocation of any Federal Department of Education funds is subject to rigorous compliance with Federal law and Administration policy, including the requirement that any program or activity receiving Federal assistance terminate illegal discrimination obscured under the label "diversity, equity, and inclusion" or similar terms and programs promoting gender ideology.

Section 3 part (b) also includes the same language that's in all other EOs, "This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations."

This Associated Press penned an article about the executive order summarizes what the EO does and doesn't mean for schools: The Department isn't set to close completely, it will retain certain critical functions such as preserving its responsibilities for Title I funding, Pell grants, IDEA funding, and managing federal student loans. Even in light of recent reductions in force at USED, the agency assured state school chiefs in a March 14 letter that "critical functions for elementary and secondary education will not be impacted by these cuts." This EO will be challenged in court, as well as in Congress. Teacher unions have already signaled they will file a lawsuit against the order, and there is not enough support in Congress to pass legislation to close the Department. Even if a bill passed the House, it would require 60 votes in the Senate to pass (in order to break a Democratic filibuster), and no Democrats support closing USED.

There isn't a lot of clarity on what USED functions would be delegated to other agencies if the White House chose to reorganize or shift programs around. USED plays a big role in civil rights enforcement in schools, and the Trump Administration has relied on USED to promote education priorities in their agenda, including investigating discrimination based on race and for threatening to withdraw federal funding from schools and colleges that promote "transgender ideology" or "illegal DEI" activities. The administration's anti-DEI EOs are also being challenged in court due to lack of clarity on what constitutes illegal DEI activity as well.

Maine Department of Education

Child Nutrition

Monday April 28, 1:30 PM "Updates and Reminders" Webinar – this webinar will discuss changes that go into effect for school year 2025–2026.

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 by May 15, 2025. All questions submitted will be addressed in the webinar.

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

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 2025 dates are: April 24, 2025; July 24, 2025; October 23, 2025 - All begin 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.



[Trump administration moves to cut off Maine’s federal K-12 funds](#) – K-12 Dive

[5 years later: How COVID-19 changed HR](#) – HR Dive

[NAPT Issues New Position on School Bus Seatbelts](#) – School Transportation News

[Future of Electric School Bus Funding Remains Unknown, Warns Expert](#) – School Transportation News

[How the Education Department cuts could hurt low-income and rural schools](#) – NPR

[How will Education Department cuts impact special education?](#) – K-12 Dive

[E-rate’s future hangs in the balance as Supreme Court hears arguments in universal service case](#) – K-12 Dive

[Trump changes put school districts at financial risk, Moody’s says](#) – K-12 Dive

[The Education Department’s approach to civil rights enforcement is changing. Here’s how.](#) – K-12 Dive

[States, lawmakers push back on ‘abrupt and chaotic’ reversal of COVID funds](#) – K-12 Dive



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.