



Maine Charter School Commission

Monthly Commission Meeting

Published on March 7, 2025 at 9:42 AM EST

Date and Time

Tuesday March 11, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT

Location

Room #103, Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta or via Zoom

The **Vision** of the Maine Charter School Commission is that ***"Innovative public charter schools will provide Maine students with an equitable opportunity for an excellent education where students are valued, supported and challenged."***

The **Mission** of the Maine Charter School Commission is ***"To authorize, monitor and support innovative public charter schools that provide a dynamic, high-quality education for every student."***

Reminders:

- This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.
- We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are heard.

Any person seeking special accommodation for the public meeting should contact Sue Whipkey at (207)816-2187 or susan.whipkey@maine.gov.

Agenda

| | Purpose | Presenter |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| I. Opening Items | | |
| A. Record Attendance | | Susan Whipkey |
| B. Call the Meeting to Order | | Norm Higgins |
| C. To Consider the Approval of the 2/11/25 Commission Meeting Minutes | Approve Minutes | Norm Higgins |
| II. Comments from Commission Chair | | |
| • <i>Legislation</i> | | |
| A. Comments | Discuss | Norm Higgins |
| III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda | | |
| A. Additions/Adjustments | Discuss | Norm Higgins |
| IV. Committee Reports | | |
| A. School Performance Committee | FYI | Tori Kornfield |
| B. Finance Committee | FYI | Leigh Albert |
| • <i>FY25 Budget vs Actual Spending Report</i> | | |
| C. Executive Committee | FYI | Norm Higgins |
| D. Ad-Hoc New School Application Review Committee | FYI | Lana Ewing |
| V. Public Comment* | | |
| A. Public Comment | Discuss | Norm Higgins |
| VI. Presentation(s) | | |
| <i>None</i> | | |

Purpose Presenter

VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates Discuss Lana Ewing

B. Organizational Updates Discuss Lana Ewing

- Mid-Year Meeting Summary
- 2025 Renewal Timelines
 - ACADIA Academy
 - Maine Arts Academy

C. Media Updates FYI Lana Ewing

- Baxter Academy - Building Hope Impact Grant Finalist for Educational Innovation

VIII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

None

IX. Unfinished Business

None

X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

None

XI. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)

A. New Governing Board Members FYI Norm Higgins

- ACADIA Academy (Aaron Landry)
- Ecology Learning Center (Malcolm Campbell)
- Ecology Learning Center (Kenneth Hahn)

B. Board Member Resignations FYI Norm Higgins

None

Purpose Presenter

C. Board Member Term Outs FYI Norm Higgins
None

XII. Future Topics

A. Future Topics FYI Norm Higgins
April

- Consideration of New School Finalists

May

- New School Vote
- Consider the Approval of Commission's FY26 Budget
- Ad-Hoc Nominating Committee (Election of Officers)

June

- To Consider the Need to Hold a Commission Meeting in July

XIII. Announcements

A. Important Dates FYI Norm Higgins

- 5/29/25 - Maine Charter School Hall of Flags from 8 AM - 12 PM
- 10/22/25 - Maine Arts Academy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony from 5 PM - 7 PM

B. Upcoming Business Meetings FYI Norm Higgins

- **April 8, 2025** (*Cross Office Building, Room #103, Augusta*) or Zoom
- **May 13, 2025** (*Cross Office Building, Room #103, Augusta*) or Zoom

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting Vote Norm Higgins

* The Charter School Commission does not allow airing of complaints in public meetings regarding Commission and charter school employees or school employment matters, in order to protect employee privacy, to comply with Maine law and pursuant to our contractual relation with the schools. To the extent that the Commission receives complaints and concerns relating to school employees in writing, those concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the Commission and its staff outside of a public meeting. This meeting is not the appropriate forum for such comments. You are free to direct your concerns in writing to the Commission's Executive Director, if you have not done so already.

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of the 2/11/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: C. To Consider the Approval of the 2/11/25 Commission Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Monthly Commission Meeting on February 11, 2025

APPROVED



Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 11, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Location

Room #103, Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta or via Zoom

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Directors Present

James Ford (remote), Jim Handy, Leigh Albert, Norm Higgins, Tom Keller, Tori Kornfield

Directors Absent

Brian Langley

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

James Ford

Guests Present

Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

James Ford arrived at 1:10 PM.

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Norm Higgins called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Feb 11, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 1/14/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Commission Meeting on 01-14-25.

Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Brian Langley Absent

Tom Keller Aye

Norm Higgins Aye

James Ford Absent

Tori Kornfield Aye

Leigh Albert Aye

Jim Handy Aye

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Norm has reserved the Hall of Flags for the Charter Schools on May 29th from 8 AM - 12 PM.

Informational handouts for legislators will be available.

Norm is working to set a meeting with the Education Committee to share the MCSC Performance Framework. Tori and Lana will attend.

Norm provided the following update on current legislation:

- National level - must be patient and respond as appropriately as possible when more details are available.
- State level - School choice will be a defining issue before the Education Committee.
- Commission level
 - Senator Joe Rafferty introduced the DFAS Administrative change bill.
 - Senator Jim Libby submitted a bill to raise the enrollment cap for virtual schools by 10 % in each of the next two years. Not mandatory, but permissive to give the Commission the ability to amend contracts if needed.
 - Representative Sheila Lyman introduced a bill to address inequities in state funding of school facilities by extending the Insured Value Factor allocation to the Charter schools.
 - Representative Gary Drinkwater introduced a bill to add more than 10 charter schools. The MCSC will monitor.

Amy is monitoring the process regularly and will relay updates as soon as known so the Commission members stay in the information loop.

Tom suggested to review LD81 that gives the MDOE Commissioner latitude to encourage innovation within public schools.

Norm contacted the Governor's office to inform about the expiration of terms for four members at the end of this year. They will reach out individually.

III. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

CRCS representative shared the following:

- Elizabeth Firnkes from CRCS shared the school held their annual Ravencon overnight event. Over 1/3 of the students participated. This event raises money for the John Shea memorial scholarship.
- Susan Muzzy shared that the school placed in the top three of the Maine WinterKids contest. The school partnered with 7 different organizations who now are working with the school.

- Travis shared that CRCS received Healthy Meals Incentive recognition awards for improving nutritional quality in school meals. A CRCS team will be accepting the award in Las Vegas.

IV. Presentation(s)

A. Heather King - Maine Arts Academy Grants

Heather King, the Head of School at Maine Arts Academy, provided an overview of the grants the school has received.

- Kennebec Catalyst Grant for \$30,000 over three years. This will be used for auditorium seating and then a collaborative theater performance with the Augusta Colonial Theater.
- Extended Learning Opportunity Grant from the MDOE for \$76,320. This will enable the 11th grade students to explore careers that are part of Maine's history and culture. Some of the possibilities are boat building, lobstering, blueberry farming, whoopie pie production and maple syrup production. The end requirement is an art project like a photography show, a dance show.
- Extended Learning Outdoor Grant from the MDOE for \$54,000 allowed the school to hold a 6 week summer camp combining biking with photography. This led to the formation of an active mountain bike team.
- Two Full Plate, Full Potential Grants for \$3,500 and \$5,000. \$3,500 was used for kitchen supplies and \$5,000 was used to provide a second chance breakfast program.
- Margaret Burnham Charitable Trust for \$3,200 used to purchase lighting equipment for the film studies and photography departments.
- Teach with Tech Grant for \$30,000 allowed the school to set up an I-Mac computer lab. The lab will be used for graphic design, photoshop, desktop publishing, video editing, digital visual etc. which will elevate the current programming.
- Other - will apply for an Expansion grant for the middle school (CSP Federal Grant)

Heather also highlighted that the students have a window arts display on Water Street in Augusta and an art show at the Monkey Tree Art Gallery in Gardiner among many other activities.

Jim inquired what professional development will be offered over the summer to prepare for the new middle school. Heather explained that three middle school teachers have been hired, and they will be working with the high school staff in March to align the middle school and high school learning standards.

Tom asked if Maine Arts Academy might display their art in the State House on the second floor. He also suggested reaching out to some Maine writers who may have foundations.

Leigh inquired what % of the operating budget comes from grants. Heather will check.

Heather reported that Kennebec Savings Bank appreciated the thank you card sent by the Commission.

B. Joe Mattos - Educational Policy Values

Joe Mattos of the Maine Charter School Alliance presented a framework that may be used to evaluate policies as they are developed by the state, boards and schools. The framework categorizes the policy values of efficiency, equity, excellence, and choice. He pointed out:

- Efficiency is related to accountability. The Performance Framework holds the schools accountable.
- Equity - Students must have equal opportunity. As schools raise excellence, they must be careful to continue to provide equity.
- Excellence - The Performance Framework sets high expectations. Monitoring of school culture in addition to academics is important. Encouraging innovation is also important.
- Choice - Charter schools provide choice and breakdown educational silos.

These can be used to evaluate a policy and determine what the unintended consequences may be.

Joe Drago suggested the book "Equity, What It Is and Why It Matters " which discusses the value of public education.

V. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

B. Organizational Updates

The Mid-Year meetings with the schools have been completed. Amy has written the reports and sent to the schools for their review. The results will be shared at the March meetings. There was strong representation from administrators and board members at all the schools. The discussion focused on areas where the schools were not meeting expectations at the end of last year.

New School applications are due on February 13. Lana will update the Commission on what is received. The receipt will start the timeline of application review. Lana revised the rubric used to evaluate the applications to match the changes made to the current application. The rubric was sent to all who sent a letter of intent for transparency purposes. The ad hoc committee will have a training opportunity with David Hartman to complete an unbiased review of the applications.

Budget season is coming. Two drafts of Commission spending will be developed: one for the current structure and one for the potential body corporate and politic structure. Norm suggested a review of the carryover balance and encumbering as much of the amount as possible. Leigh suggested reserving funds for specific purposes, summer programming or professional development for example.

Lana has been meeting with the Alliance members monthly and is grateful for the partnership.

Lana has been drafting testimony for the bill to restructure the Commission. Jim suggested to include a chart within the testimony demonstrating the current status compared to the proposed structure to highlight savings and benefits.

C. Media Updates

VI. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. Enrollment - Senate and House Representation /"Heat Map"/Resident District/Resident Town

Amy provided an overview of the enrollment reports that reflect the October 1 certified enrollments.

There are 2,717 students enrolled in Charter Schools coming from 142 districts and 298 cities, towns and unorganized territories across the state. All 16 counties are represented.

The Senate and House Representation reports are new this year and have been provided to the schools and boards so that they will be able to reach out to their local representation to inform about the good work going on within the schools. Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee are highlight.

Norm stated that he and Lana have discussed employing professional public relations to prepare templates using this data for the schools to use for outreach and relationship building.

VII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider Moving the November Commission Meeting from November 11th (Veterans Day) to November 18th

Jim Handy made a motion to change the November 2025 Commission Meeting from November 11th (Veterans Day) to November 18th.

Tom Keller seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Norm Higgins Aye

Leigh Albert Aye

Brian Langley Absent

Tori Kornfield Aye

Jim Handy Aye

James Ford Aye

Tom Keller Aye

VIII. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)

A. New Governing Board Members

B. Board Member Resignations

C. Board Member Term Outs

Lana acknowledged Chris Lewis who has been instrumental in the development of the Ecology Learning Center.

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

Documents used during the meeting

- Dashboard for FY25 01_31_25.pdf
- Educational Policy Values - MAPCS.pdf
- Breakdown of Senate and House Resident District Representation.pdf
- Heat Map - October 2024 Student HomeTown Data.pdf
- 2024-25 Resident District Breakdown.pdf
- 2024-25 Resident Town Breakdown.pdf
- CRCS New Governing Board Member (James Hodgkin).pdf
- MeANS New Governing Board Member (Greg Bazakas).pdf

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Coversheet

Finance Committee

Section: IV. Committee Reports
Item: B. Finance Committee
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Dashboard for FY25 02_28_25.pdf



MCSC FY25 Budget vs. Actual (As of February 28, 2025)

| Revenue | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Allotment - Legislatively Mandated | \$694,809 | \$649,601 | (\$45,208) | \$694,809 |
| Additional State Subsidy Available | \$110,603 | \$110,932 | \$329 | \$29,395 |
| Total Allotment - ED279 | \$805,412 | \$760,533 | (\$44,879) | \$724,204 |
| Carryover Funds | \$38,285 | \$7,671 | (\$30,614) | \$82,096 |
| Grants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,163 |
| TOTAL Annual Revenue | \$843,697 | \$768,203 | (\$75,494) | \$808,463 |

| Expenses (1) | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total Expense Summary | \$849,472 | \$467,594 | \$381,879 | \$715,055 |

(1) Detail of Expenses

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Personnel | | | | |
| Staff Salaries | \$302,779 | \$209,370 | ↑ \$93,409 | \$275,491 |
| Atlantic Staffing Service Fee | \$67,669 | \$45,454 | ↑ \$22,215 | \$101,932 |
| Benefits | \$63,000 | \$42,000 | ↑ \$21,000 | \$60,000 |
| TOTAL Personnel | \$433,448 | \$296,824 | \$136,624 | \$437,423 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Contracted Services | | | | |
| Financial Consultant | \$51,739 | \$13,163 | ↑ \$38,576 | \$38,408 |
| Public Relations/ Engagement | \$25,000 | \$0 | ↑ \$25,000 | \$20,843 |
| Project-Based Support | \$45,000 | \$5,494 | ↑ \$39,506 | \$51,563 |
| Operational/Financial Support | \$0 | \$0 | ⇒ \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Contracted Services | \$121,739 | \$18,657 | \$103,082 | \$110,814 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Personal Services - Per Diem / Commission Members | | | | |
| Per Diem | \$15,400 | \$6,160 | ↑ \$9,240 | \$12,729.00 |
| TOTAL Personal Services | \$15,400 | \$6,160 | \$9,240 | \$12,729 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Travel | | | | |
| Commission Members | \$8,400 | \$1,968 | ↑ \$6,433 | \$3,958.18 |
| Staff | \$13,000 | \$8,601 | ↑ \$4,399 | \$7,771.93 |
| TOTAL Travel | \$21,400 | \$10,568 | \$10,832 | \$11,730 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| General Operations | | | | |
| Insurance/Risk Management | \$893 | \$27 | ↑ \$866 | \$822 |
| Printing/Photocopying Services | \$1,000 | \$836 | ↑ \$164 | \$516 |
| Dues and Subscriptions | \$7,203 | \$6,231 | ↑ \$972 | \$6,926 |
| Meeting Room Rental | \$1,050 | \$0 | ↑ \$1,050 | \$0 |
| Postage | \$315 | \$0 | ↑ \$315 | \$272 |
| Advertising | \$525 | \$200 | ↑ \$325 | \$200 |
| Food | \$420 | \$944 | ↓ (\$524) | \$234 |
| General Government Service Center | \$11,825 | \$11,458 | ↑ \$367 | \$9,395 |
| Legal and Professional Services | \$11,401 | \$500 | ↑ \$10,901 | \$10,858 |
| Office and Other Supplies | \$525 | \$109 | ↑ \$416 | \$413 |
| TOTAL General Operations | \$35,157 | \$20,305 | \$14,852 | \$29,636 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Technology for Schools | | | | |
| NWEA MAP Test | \$14,400 | \$0 | ↑ \$14,400 | \$13,351 |
| Panorama Education | \$11,500 | \$0 | ↑ \$11,500 | \$10,625 |
| Infinite Campus | \$21,789 | \$22,024 | ↓ (\$235) | \$19,615 |
| Lotterease | \$2,625 | \$4,614 | ↓ (\$1,989) | \$6,669 |
| Epicerter | \$40,646 | \$34,210 | ↑ \$6,436 | \$33,710 |
| College-Readiness Diagnostics | \$4,725 | \$2,040 | ↑ \$2,685 | \$4,500 |
| Board on Track | \$35,000 | \$27,495 | ↑ \$7,505 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Technology for Schools | \$130,684 | \$90,383 | \$40,302 | \$88,470 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Technology for MCSC | | | | |
| Office of Information Technology | \$3,675 | \$3,945 | ↓ (\$270) | \$8,636 |
| Cell Phone Services | \$2,730 | \$1,106 | ↑ \$1,624 | \$2,664 |
| Website | \$5,000 | \$0 | ↑ \$5,000 | \$0 |
| Remote CART Captioning Service | \$0 | \$0 | ⇒ \$0 | \$2,350 |
| BoardOnTrack | \$5,775 | \$5,495 | ↑ \$280 | \$5,495 |
| TOTAL Technology for MCSC | \$17,180 | \$10,547 | \$6,633 | \$19,145 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Charter School Innovation/Collaboration | | | | |
| Innovation Fund/Professional Development | \$40,000 | \$11,042 | ↑ \$28,958 | \$0 |
| Board Chair Collaboration | \$1,700 | \$0 | ↑ \$1,700 | \$1,511 |
| CountMe In | \$1,500 | \$0 | ↑ \$1,500 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Charter School Innovation/C | \$43,200 | \$11,042 | \$32,158 | \$1,511 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Sta-Cap | | | | |
| Sta-Cap | \$10,264 | \$3,108 | ↑ \$7,156 | \$3,597 |
| TOTAL Sta-Cap | \$10,264 | \$3,108 | \$7,156 | \$3,597.28 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Contingency | | | | |
| Contingency | \$21,000 | \$0 | ↑ \$21,000 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Contingency | \$21,000 | \$0 | \$21,000 | \$0 |

Coversheet

Organizational Updates

Section: VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report
Item: B. Organizational Updates
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2025 Mid-Year Portfolio Summary.pdf
2025 Renewal Timeline - ACADIA Academy.pdf
2025 Renewal Timeline - Maine Arts Academy.pdf

MAINE

CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

2025 Mid-Year Portfolio Summary

In January, Commission staff conducted mid-year meetings with each charter operator. Attendees at the majority of the meetings included the school's board chairperson, a second board member, and the school's leader or leadership team.

In advance of the meeting, schools were asked to be prepared to discuss areas of the Performance Framework where they were "approaching" or "not meeting" expectations in SY2023-24.

In the weeks following the meetings, staff developed reports that captured the mid-year data presented prior to and during the meetings. Draft reports were sent to each board chair and school leader for review.

The School Performance Committee conducted a detailed analysis and discussion of each school's individual report, noting areas of strength, growth and challenge.

Below, you will find a summary of the topics covered at the meetings. More detailed information can be found in the individual school reports.

OF NOTE:

- ACADIA dedicates two hours each day for small group literacy instruction with all adults and students in the building participating.
- 100% of Baxter's senior class submitted college applications with all completing a FAFSA form.
- The CRCS board is focused on securing a consolidated facility, actively working with HighMark and Raymond James.

- The Ecology Learning Center partners closely with vocational rehab to ensure support for students who have no plans to attend any type of post-secondary programming.
- Fiddlehead reports initial success with their new middle school model which has a Teaching Assistant in every middle school classroom.
- MeANS is on track to have its highest graduation rate – 92% - in the school's history.
- Plans are well underway at Maine Arts Academy for the opening of their new middle school and celebration of its 10th year anniversary.
- MCA is focused on student growth in mathematics using IXL as an intervention and instruction tool, administering weekly diagnostic exams as needed; added a tutoring program that is available 24 hours per day/7 days per week; and implemented a Student Mentor Program where a student who needs additional help can sit with another student (not an adult) in a breakout room during a live session.
- MeVA is using iReady Math and iReady Reading to gauge standards mastery for newly enrolled students. iReady Reading is completed on an ongoing basis based on NWEA MAP assessment data for students who have an identified need for a “deeper look” at skill deficits. Leadership reports that this year “incoming students seem to have more challenges with reading” than they’ve seen in the past.

HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS:

- At the time of the mid-year meetings, 6 of the 9 public charter schools were in their annual open enrollment period with schools reporting a high percentage of re-enrollments and strong interest from new families and students.
- Many schools have a waitlist, and the waitlist is often partially filled because some families choose alternative educational options while waiting.
- Schools who administer the NWEA MAP Assessment report that growth results are “comparable” to growth results reported from the Spring administration of the Maine Through Year Assessment.
- Schools who use the Accuplacer to assess post-secondary readiness report positive results for those students who have taken the assessment so far this year.
- Schools with poor results on last Spring’s Panorama School Climate surveys are working to understand the results and taking action to ensure that those results are more favorable this coming Spring. Additionally, schools who had

low participation are exploring ways to increase participation, particularly among families.

- ACADIA Academy, Ecology Learning Center and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences all have new governing board chairs while both ACADIA and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences have experienced turnover in the Head of School role.
- Schools report culture shifts since the pandemic around school attendance, sharing that students are being kept at home more often.
- Chronic Absenteeism continues to be an area of growth with schools working to refine their attendance policies and “Anytime/Anywhere Learning” plans. Schools report that economics are a key barrier to attendance.
- FY24 audits have been received from 7 of the 9 charter public schools, with two requesting a formal extension from the Maine Department of Education. It is important to note that schools provided documentation to its auditors on time, but the auditors are slow to close the audits.
- Two schools had modified opinions as part of the audit and the schools have put processes in plan to correct the areas cited.
- Schools continue to report difficulty using the online platform we require for board training, making the training “prohibitive”.
- There are several schools whose governing board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes have been posted late.
- Schools report a high number of students taking dual enrollment courses.
- The requirement that virtual school students participate in the Maine Through Year Assessment in person is burdensome.



2025 Renewal Timeline - ACADIA Academy

(subject to changes)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Friday, May 23, 2025 | Preliminary Performance Framework Outcomes and School Self-Assessment via Epicenter |
| Week of June 2, 2025 | Renewal Check-In with Board and Admin via Zoom |
| Monday, June 30, 2025 | MCSC issues Year 4 Performance Report and Renewal Guidance to School |
| Friday, July 11, 2025 | End-of-Year Data due to MCSC via Epicenter |
| Monday, July 14, 2025 | MCSC issues Renewal Application to the school via Epicenter |
| August 2025 | On Site End-of-Year Visit with Board and Admin |
| Friday, September 5, 2025 | Renewal Application and Amendment Requests for substantial changes due to MCSC via Epicenter |
| Week of September 8, 2025 | Renewal Site Visit with Focus Groups (Students, Families, Staff) and Classroom Observations |
| September 2025 | Review Team submits Renewal Site Visit Report to Commission |
| Week of September 22, 2025 | Public Hearing |
| Tuesday, October 14, 2025 | Renewal Vote and, if necessary, separate amendment vote(s) at MCSC Business Meeting <i>(39 days from 9/5)</i> |
| No later than June 30, 2026 | Contract review and signing |

If Needed:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| October 2025 | If renewal is with conditions, a timeline of events and tasks will be developed |
| November 18, 2025 | Review of renewal condition tasks at MCSC Business Meeting |
| November 2025-May 2026 | Report on Completion of Conditions |



2025 Renewal Timeline - Maine Arts Academy

(subject to changes)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Friday, May 23, 2025 | Preliminary Performance Framework Outcomes and School Self-Assessment via Epicenter |
| Week of June 2, 2025 | Renewal Check-In with Board and Admin via Zoom |
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| | |
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| November 2025-May 2026 | Report on Completion of Conditions |

Coversheet

Media Updates

Section: VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report
Item: C. Media Updates
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: BUILDING HOPE ANNOUNCES 2025 IMPACT GRANT FINALISTS.pdf

BUILDING HOPE ANNOUNCES 2025 IMPACT GRANT FINALISTS, CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN CHARTER SCHOOL EDUCATION



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20 Charter Schools Recognized for Excellence in Community Engagement, Educational Innovation, Student Empowerment, and Leadership

\$160,000 in Grants to be Awarded at the Fourth Annual Building Hope IMPACT Summit Awards Gala in Miami on May 7

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Building Hope](#), the non-profit leader in charter school facilities, financing, and services, today announced the 20 finalists for its fourth annual Building Hope IMPACT Awards. Each of the four award categories—Community Engagement, Educational Innovation, Student Empowerment, and the S. Joseph Bruno Model Charter Award—features five outstanding finalists that demonstrate the transformative power of education to change lives and communities.

This year, Building Hope will award a total of \$160,000 in grants, with top winners in each category receiving \$20,000 and two runners-up receiving \$10,000 each. Since the inception of its IMPACT Program, the nonprofit has awarded \$440,000 to 33 charter schools and \$40,000 to eight school volunteer leaders.

"Every day, charter schools are changing lives through innovation, dedication and a deep commitment to student success."

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"Every day, charter schools across the country are changing lives through innovation, dedication, and a deep commitment to student success," said Building Hope President and CEO Bill Hansen. "These 20 finalists are proof of what's possible when educators and communities work alongside each other to serve students and families. Building Hope is proud to celebrate the achievements of these finalists and support their continued impact."

The top five 2025 IMPACT Award finalists by category, in alphabetical order, are:

S. Joseph Bruno Charter School Leadership Award

1. [East Mountain High School](#), Sandia Park, New Mexico
2. [Maya Angelou Public Charter School](#), Washington, D.C.
3. [Sallie B. Howard School of Arts & Science](#), Wilson, North Carolina
4. [SouthTech Schools](#), Boynton Beach, Florida
5. [Yinghua Academy](#), Minneapolis, Minnesota

Community Engagement Award

1. [Austin Achieve High School](#), Austin, Texas
2. [Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy](#), Chattanooga, Tennessee
3. [Island Montessori](#), Wilmington, North Carolina
4. [Middleburg Community Charter School](#), Middleburg, Virginia
5. [Suncoast School of Innovative Studies](#), Sarasota, Florida

Educational Innovation Award

1. [Baxter Academy](#), Portland, Maine
2. [Beta Academy](#), Houston, Texas
3. [Le Monde International School](#), Norman, Oklahoma
4. [Malama Honua Public Charter School](#), Waimanalo, Hawaii
5. [Reaching All Minds Academy](#), Durham, North Carolina

Student Empowerment Award

1. [Avalon School](#), St. Paul, Minnesota
2. [Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy](#), Kansas City, Missouri
3. [Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies](#), Elizabeth City, North Carolina
4. [Polaris Charter Academy](#), Chicago, Illinois
5. [Technology Leadership High School](#), Albuquerque, New Mexico

In the next round of the grant selection process, a selection committee, comprised of charter industry leaders and past award winners, will interview the finalists and choose three winners in each category, to be announced in March. Leaders from the winning schools will receive an

expense-paid trip to the Building Hope IMPACT Summit, held in Miami on May 6-7, where they will each deliver a 10-minute IMPACT talk as the final step in determining the award amounts. At the Summit's closing gala, Building Hope will present \$40,000 in grants per category: awarding \$20,000 to the top winner and \$10,000 each to two runners-up.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the remarkable work of the schools that have applied for the Impact Awards," said Trisha Leitem, Director of Building Hope Services and Co-Chair of the Selection Committee. "The passion, resilience, and innovation demonstrated by this year's applicants are truly inspirational. Their dedication to creating lasting change has already made a difference in so many students' lives, and we are looking forward to honoring them for all they have done and continue to do."

For more information about the IMPACT Awards or to register for the 2025 IMPACT Summit, visit www.buildinghope.org/impact/awards.

About Building Hope

Building Hope is a national nonprofit that empowers advancements in education through our work with charter schools providing unparalleled facility financing, real estate development, and operational services. We believe a facility should never be the barrier preventing a child from attending a great school. During our 21-year history, Building Hope has supported over \$1 billion in the development of school facilities. For more information, visit www.buildinghope.org.

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SOURCE Building Hope

Coversheet

New Governing Board Members

Section: XI. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)

Item: A. New Governing Board Members

Purpose: FYI

Submitted by:

Related Material: ACADIA New Governing Board Member (Aaron Landry).pdf
ELC New Governing Board Member (Malcolm Campbell).pdf
ELC New Governing Board Member (Ken Hahn).pdf

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To Kate Dumais <kate.dumais@acadiaacademy.org>

Public Charter School Governing Board

Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School ACADIA

Name of Board Member Aaron Landry

Email Address skyhuntergsp@live.com

Occupation Therapist

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Why do you wish to serve on the governing board? I wish to participate in my children's educational future, be well informed as a parent and give back to the community as well as foster healthy connections.
2. What is your understanding of the educational needs of students in the catchment area? The need to create a positive association with learning and to be able to adapt to each child's individuals' strengths as pathways for success. The more we can associate learning with fund while achieving our objectives the more likely success will be achieved.
3. Please list any previous or present educational involvement; such as board member, budget committee, citizens committees, etc. List school(s) or district(s). I ran a school-based therapy program for an agency and was connected to multiple school systems K-12.
4. What special qualifications do you have that will help you to be a board member? I work with a variety of people who face challenges with resources or behavioral challenges with their children, I have an awareness of community resources, and the current financial challenges of the market and the need for all providers to work together given limited resources.
5. What is your understanding of the role you will play as a public charter school board member? As a new member my goal is to learn from the more experienced members of the board to determine where I can best be of support.

Sign Aaron Landry Date 1/23/25

This form MUST be submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission via Epicenter.

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Public Charter School Governing Board Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School __Ecology Learning Center_____

Name of Board Member _____Malcolm Campbell_____

Email Address _____malcolm.campbell@ecologylearningcenter.org_____

Occupation _____retired college biology professor_____

Please respond to the following questions:

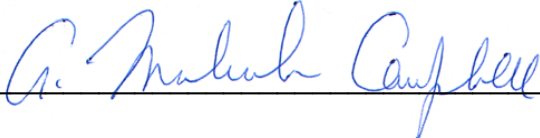
1. Why do you wish to serve on the governing board?
I believe in the school's mission and I value helping rural children of Maine. The curriculum aligns with my understanding of a good education. I have experience with finances and governing boards of non-profits so I think I can help ELC be successful.
2. What is your understanding of the educational needs of students in the catchment area?
Like all high school students, they need good instructors who can motivate them and teach them how to become life-long learners. They need role models who understand how Maine's ecology is vital to the state's success and future. Leadership is best developed by challenging students early in life the way ELC does.
3. Please list any previous or present educational involvement; such as board member, budget committee, citizens committees, etc. List school(s) or district(s).
Davidson College (NC) Biology Professor, 1994 – 2024 (retired)
Founding editor of CBE Life Sciences Education journal
Board chair and charter member of CourseSource.org journal
Council member and Treasurer, American Society for Cell Biology
Secretary of Woodlawn School Board (Davidson, NC)
4. What special qualifications do you have that will help you to be a board member?
As listed above, I have been a board member on multiple education-related organizations. In these positions, I played critical role in establishing strategic

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goals and sustainable budgets. Furthermore, I taught college biology for 30 years using evidence-based pedagogy.

5. What is your understanding of the role you will play as a public charter school board member?

I will be on the finance and governance committees. I do not need to insert myself into the classroom or the day-to-day running of a fantastic school. My role will be at the higher level, focusing on goals, budgets, fundraising and supporting the staff to continue their roles as they work with our students.

Sign  Date 25 February, 2025

This form MUST be submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission via Epicenter.

Public Charter School Governing Board Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School Ecology Learning Center

Name of Board Member Kenneth Hahn

Email Address Ken.hahn@ecologylearningcenter.org

Occupation Operations Director

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Why do you wish to serve on the governing board? *I believe the mission of place based learning is important and I want to be of service to the staff.*
2. What is your understanding of the educational needs of students in the catchment area? *I think the needs are broad but I believe there is a strong need for a supportive learning environment that encourages personal growth and responsibility.*
3. Please list any previous or present educational involvement; such as board member, budget committee, citizens committees, etc. List school(s) or district(s). *Treasurer of the Pireland Suzuki School in a privately run music program*
4. What special qualifications do you have that will help you to be a board member? *Operations and facilities. Expertise with Budgets and Finance*
5. What is your understanding of the role you will play as a public charter school board member? *Governance and oversight/supervision of Senior Staff (Primarily the head of school)*

Sign *Kenneth Hahn* Date 1/31/24

For your convenience this sheet is located on our website under Resources for Authorized Schools (<http://www.maine.gov/csc/>).

Please see the Maine Charter School Commission's Policy on Public Records.