



Maine Charter School Commission

Monthly Commission Meeting

Published on June 6, 2025 at 2:46 PM EDT

Date and Time

Tuesday June 10, 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 4/8/25 Commission Meeting Minutes | Approve Minutes | Norm Higgins |
| II. Comments from Commission Chair | | |
| 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 |
| C. Executive Committee | FYI | Norm Higgins |
| D. Ad-Hoc Election of Officers Committee | FYI | Norm Higgins |
| V. Public Comment* | | |
| A. Public Comment | Discuss | Norm Higgins |
| VI. Presentation(s) | | |
| • <i>None</i> | | |
| VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report | | |
| A. School Updates | Discuss | Lana Ewing |

| | Purpose | Presenter |
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|----------------------------------|---------|------------|
| B. Organizational Updates | Discuss | Lana Ewing |
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|-------------------------|-----|------------|
| C. Media Updates | FYI | Lana Ewing |
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VIII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

- *None*

IX. Unfinished Business

- *None*

X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| A. To Consider Cancelling the July 8th Commission Meeting | Vote | Norm Higgins |
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| B. To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Bylaw Amendment Request | Vote | Norm Higgins |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|

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| C. To Consider the Approval of the Request to Incur Debt Rubric | Vote | Norm Higgins |
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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| D. To Consider the Approval of the Policy Defining a School, Campus, and Facility | Vote | Norm Higgins |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|

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

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|---------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| A. New Governing Board Members | FYI | Norm Higgins |
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- *Maine Connections Academy (Nicole Peluso)*

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|-------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| B. Board Member Resignations | FYI | Norm Higgins |
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- *None*

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| C. Board Member Term Outs | FYI | Norm Higgins |
|----------------------------------|-----|--------------|

Purpose Presenter

- *ACADIA Academy (Donald Dearborn)*

XII. Future Topics

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|-----------|------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| A. | Future Topics July/August | FYI | Norm Higgins |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----|--------------|

- To Consider Community Regional Charter School's Request to Consolidate Into One Building and to Incur the Debt Required to Build the Building
- Election of Officers
- Panorama Survey Results Presentation

XIII. Announcements

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----|--------------|
| A. | Important Dates | FYI | Norm Higgins |
|-----------|-----------------|-----|--------------|

- 10/22/25 - Maine Arts Academy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony from 5 PM - 7 PM

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----|--------------|
| B. | Upcoming Business Meetings | FYI | Norm Higgins |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----|--------------|

- *TBD*

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----|--------------|
| C. | 2025 Graduation Dates | FYI | Norm Higgins |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----|--------------|

- Community Regional Charter School (June 13th at 6:00pm/Skowhegan Municipal Building, Opera House-Skowhegan)
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Threshold Program (July 11th at 6:00pm/MeANS Campus-Hinckley)
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Campus Program (July 18th at 6:00pm/MeANS Campus-Hinckley)

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 4/8/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section: | I. Opening Items |
| Item: | C. To Consider the Approval of the 4/8/25 Commission Meeting Minutes |
| Purpose: | Approve Minutes |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | Minutes for Monthly Commission Meeting on May 13, 2025 |

APPROVED



Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday May 13, 2025 at 1:00 PM

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."***

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Directors Present

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

Directors Absent

None

Guests Present

Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

Leigh arrived at 1:08

James joined at 1:10

Brian joined at 1:30

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 May 13, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 4/8/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Commission Meeting on 04-08-25.

Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Brian Langley Absent

Norm Higgins Aye

Leigh Albert Absent

Jim Handy Aye

Tom Keller Aye

James Ford Absent

Tori Kornfield Aye

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Norm asked Tom to read the Maine Charter School Vision and Mission Statements and gave the following updates:

- Legislative Activity - Norm thanked the Alliance and Bill Doughty for organizing testimony at the legislature. He reported that he and Lana attended public hearings and work sessions. The bill for a structural change of the commission was approved unanimously by the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. Lana continues to coordinate with Senator Rafferty on other pending bills.
- The Hall of Flags is coming up on May 29th.
- Norm nominated Tori as the senior member of the Ad-hoc nominating committee and reported that officer candidates will be nominated during the June Commission meeting with the confirmation vote taking place in the next monthly meeting, July or August if the July meeting is cancelled.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

Jim Handy made a motion to add a presentation from representatives of the Moxie Public School to the agenda.

Tom Keller seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield Aye

Brian Langley Absent

Tom Keller Aye

Leigh Albert Aye

James Ford Absent

Jim Handy Aye

Norm Higgins Aye

IV. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori reported the following:

- The Committee discussed the Moxie Public School application. Tom added the Committee recommended conditions to add to the application which will be reviewed later in the agenda.
- Lana provided a definition for a school / campus for consideration. Tori noted that if a school wants to expand in the future, it will be required to come before the Commission for approval.

B. Finance Committee

Lana reported the following:

- CRCS shared progress on the acquisition of their new school building site and informed they plan to come before the Commission in August with an amendment request to incur debt.
- The Committee discussed the Moxie Public School application and the final recommendation from the review team.
- The Committee discussed FY26 Commission Budget which will come for a vote in today's agenda.

Norm thanked Amy for leading the project to convert the Commission to a new organizational structure.

C. Executive Committee

Norm reported the Committee discussed the following:

- Moxie Public School application.
- Commission leadership next year.

Norm suggested a review of the Executive Committee role and meeting frequency going forward.

D. Ad-Hoc New School Application Review Committee

Lana reported since last month's update, the Commission interview with Moxie Public School representatives took place and the public hearing was held. The rigorous application review process has been completed, and Lana thanked the applicant team, Commission and staff for their work. She also thanked community members who provided support and input.

Leigh also thanked David Hartman for providing training for the assessment of the applications.

Norm expressed his thanks to the Committee as well.

V. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Jana Lapoint urged that the Commission inform The Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on the role of charter schools in Maine as they are making decisions on issues that come before them.

Norm responded that the Commission provides a comprehensive report to the Committee annually. He has reached out to set up a meeting and is still waiting for a date and time confirmation.

VI. Presentation(s)

A. Moxie Public School

Dr. Beth Rabbitt on behalf of the Moxie Public School application team, provided a brief overview of their vision for the school. The team desires an innovative 6th to 12th grade school environment that will provide a diverse student population an education that is personal, purposeful and connected to their community.

VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana shared the following:

- Graduation dates are in the packet. Congratulations to all the graduates.
- Maine Virtual Academy is offering its summer 2025 enrichment program featuring project- based learning and work study options.
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences held their first AP exam this year and the Board has been interviewing candidates for its school leader. They now have 3 finalists out of 20 applications reviewed.
- Maine Arts Academy has been conducting college tours and holding open houses for the middle school expansion which has an enrollment waiting list. They held a spring theater performance, music and dance recitals, and a family Easter event. They were also approved for project-based summer school funding.

Tom suggested collecting data on scholarships received by charter school students as they graduate.

Jim asked about progress on the Panorama surveys. Amy reported the completion window closes on June 12 and that participation rates are up this year.

B. Organizational Updates

Lana reported the following:

- LD1718 - The bill seeking to establish the organizational structure of the Commission as a Public Instrumentality of the State passed the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee on May 1. The next step is a vote in the Maine House and Senate to become law. The staff is in early stages of planning implementation and Amy will manage this project provided there is a favorable vote.
- Norm complimented Lana on her clearly stated testimony on the benefits of the reorganization.
- School Renewals - Maine Arts Academy and ACADIA are up for renewal in October and preparations are beginning. The schools will submit self-assessments and preliminary performance framework data for the year in late May and staff will meet with both schools in early June to review and discuss performance trends for the last four years of the charter term. The Year 4 reports are due on June 30th.
- Thank you to the Maine DOE **Esca** team who provided training to Charter School leadership on Federal grants, program applications and management.
- Professional Development on strategic planning for School Boards and Leaders will be held on May 22nd with Naomi Ruben-Deveaux facilitating.

Amy gave an update on the Hall of Flags Event. Highlights are as follows:

- **7 of 9 schools will attend**
- **Honorary pages - CRCS, MeANS, and Maine Arts students will serve in the Senate Chamber.**
- **Performances - Maine Arts string ensemble will perform, and chorus will sing the National Anthem in the Senate.**
- **State House tours will be available for students.**
- **Light refreshments for all will be served.**
- **Bag lunches will be available for the participating students.**
- **One page informational handouts will be available to give to Legislators as they pass through.**

C. Media Updates

VIII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Approval to Move MOXIE Public Schools to Contract/Charter Negotiations

Brian Langley made a motion to Advance the Moxie Schools to Contract/Charter Negotiations.

Leigh Albert seconded the motion.

Prior to the motion Lana provided a brief summary of the Moxie Public School's application and noted the school plans to open in the fall of 2026 in Greater Portland with an initial enrollment of 120 students, 60 in 6th grade and 60 in 9th grade. They will expand by 2 grade levels every year until full enrollment. Lana also reminded that the Review Team recommendation is based on a strong collection of evidence showing the school meets expectations on the new school rubric. She referenced the detailed recommendation supplied to the Commission members and highlighted strengths in program design, operational detail, team capacity and fundraising. She reported the Review Team recommends that Moxie Public Schools advance to charter contract negotiations and that the school's launch is contingent upon a successful completion of the pre-opening plan, which is included. The pre-opening plan includes specific conditions to address areas in the application which can be strengthened before the school opens as follows:

- Meeting enrollment targets within specified ranges and dates.
- Achieving staff hiring goals with an emphasis on personnel equipped to support students with disabilities.
- Conducting effective outreach to enroll students identified in the application.
- Retaining all four founding team members in a formal role in the school or board at least through the opening in the fall of 2026.
- Establishing graduation criteria to reflect high academic rigor.
- Expanding in the future will be based on a proven success of the existing site including measures of enrollment, stability, academic performance, etc.

Leigh gave appreciation of Moxie's ambitious approach and thoughtful response to the Committee's questions.

Brian commented that the target student population and programs outlined aligns with Maine's educational and economic development goals with a scalable, sustainable vision to grow.

After the motion, Jim outlined his concerns about moving forward with the application.

His findings include financial projections with insufficient detail and reliance on out of state funding; an academic strategy without measurable outcomes and steps for executing a rigorous curriculum and hiring qualified educators; insufficient plans for engaging local stakeholders; lack of detailed plans for serving students with disabilities; and a current shortage of special education teachers may strain community resources.

Tom noted the need to monitor the curriculum design and the challenges to meet standards with an individualized instructional model.

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

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield Aye
Norm Higgins Aye
Brian Langley Aye
James Ford No
Leigh Albert Aye
Tom Keller Aye
Jim Handy No

B. To Consider the Approval of the Commission's FY26 Operating Budget

Jim Handy made a motion to adopt the Commission's FY26 Operating Budget.

Leigh Albert seconded the motion.

Lana noted there were two versions of a FY26 budget presented due to the potential reorganization of the Commission's structure. One budget reflected a proposal under the current structure while the other, most likely, proposal reflected a budget under a body politic structure with net cost savings of \$41,000. Fees to schools remain at 2.45% and carryover funds will be used to balance the budget. Increases in expenses include the extension of benefits to one staff member and the establishment of a legal contingency fund.

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

Roll Call

Leigh Albert Aye
Norm Higgins Aye
James Ford Aye
Tori Kornfield Aye
Brian Langley Aye
Tom Keller Aye
Jim Handy Aye

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

A. New Governing Board Members

Baxter Academy has a new board member.

B. Board Member Resignations

C. Board Member Term Outs

X. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

June

- To Consider the Need to Hold a Commission Meeting in July
- To Consider Maine Arts Academy's Bylaw Amendment Request

July/August

- To Consider Community Regional Charter School's Request to Consolidate Into One Building and to Incur the Debt Required to Build the Building
- Election of Officers

XI. Announcements

A. Important Dates

- 5/29/25 - Maine Charter School Hall of Flags beginning at 9 AM
- 10/22/25 - Maine Arts Academy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony from 5 PM - 7 PM

B. Upcoming Business Meetings

- **June 10, 2025** (*Cross Office Building, Room #103, Augusta*) or Zoom

C. 2025 Graduation Dates

2025 Graduation Dates

- Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (May 31st at 11:00am/Merrill Auditorium-Portland)
- Community Regional Charter School (June 13th at 6:00pm/Skowhegan Municipal Building, Opera House-Skowhegan)
- Ecology Learning Center (June 5th at 5:00pm/MOFGA)
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Campus Program (July 18th at 6:00pm/MeANS Campus-Hinckley)
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Threshold Program (July 11th at 6:00pm/MeANS Campus-Hinckley)
- Maine Arts Academy (June 1st at 12:00pm/Augusta Civic Center)
- Maine Connections Academy (June 6th at 2:00pm/Merrill Auditorium-Portland)
- Maine Virtual Academy (June 6th at 2:00pm/ZOOM)

Norm encouraged attendance and reminded the members these are stipend days. Please reach out to Lana if attending. ACADIA and Fiddlehead end of year celebration dates will be provided.

XII. 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 2:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

Documents used during the meeting

- MCA Hosts Academic Summit.pdf
- FY26 Budget Draft 05_02_2025.pdf
- Baxter - New Governing Board Member (Vincent Giuseppe Aliquo).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 05_30_25.pdf |



MCSC FY25 Budget vs. Actual (As of May 30, 2025)

| Revenue | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Allotment - Legislatively Mandated | \$694,809 | \$694,809 | \$0 | \$694,809 |
| Additional State Subsidy Available | \$110,603 | \$110,932 | \$329 | \$29,395 |
| Total Allotment - ED279 | \$805,412 | \$805,741 | \$329 | \$724,204 |
| Carryover Funds | \$38,285 | \$9,518 | (\$28,767) | \$82,096 |
| Grants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,163 |
| TOTAL Annual Revenue | \$843,697 | \$815,258 | (\$28,439) | \$808,463 |

| Expenses (1) | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Total Expense Summary | \$849,472 | \$635,090 | \$214,383 | \$715,055 |

(1) Detail of Expenses

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Personnel | | | | |
| Staff Salaries | \$302,779 | \$287,565 | ↑ \$15,214 | \$275,491 |
| Atlantic Staffing Service Fee | \$67,669 | \$62,440 | ↑ \$5,229 | \$101,932 |
| Benefits | \$63,000 | \$57,750 | ↑ \$5,250 | \$60,000 |
| TOTAL Personnel | \$433,448 | \$407,755 | \$25,693 | \$437,423 |

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|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Contracted Services | | | | |
| Financial Consultant | \$51,739 | \$23,018 | ↑ \$28,721 | \$38,408 |
| Public Relations/ Engagement | \$25,000 | \$0 | ↑ \$25,000 | \$20,843 |
| Project-Based Support | \$45,000 | \$18,466 | ↑ \$26,534 | \$51,563 |
| Operational/Financial Support | \$0 | \$0 | → \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Contracted Services | \$121,739 | \$41,484 | \$80,255 | \$110,814 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Personal Services - Per Diem / Commission Members | | | | |
| Per Diem | \$15,400 | \$10,010 | ↑ \$5,390 | \$12,729.00 |
| TOTAL Personal Services | \$15,400 | \$10,010 | \$5,390 | \$12,729 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Travel | | | | |
| Commission Members | \$8,400 | \$3,416 | ↑ \$4,984 | \$3,958.18 |
| Staff | \$13,000 | \$9,370 | ↑ \$3,630 | \$7,771.93 |
| TOTAL Travel | \$21,400 | \$12,786 | \$8,614 | \$11,730 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| General Operations | | | | |
| Insurance/Risk Management | \$893 | \$30 | ↑ \$863 | \$822 |
| Printing/Photocopying Services | \$1,000 | \$1,091 | ↓ (\$91) | \$516 |
| Dues and Subscriptions | \$7,203 | \$6,798 | ↑ \$405 | \$6,926 |
| Meeting Room Rental | \$1,050 | \$800 | ↑ \$250 | \$0 |
| Postage | \$315 | \$21 | ↑ \$294 | \$272 |
| Advertising | \$525 | \$1,190 | ↓ (\$665) | \$200 |
| Food | \$420 | \$1,707 | ↓ (\$1,287) | \$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 | \$23,704 | \$11,453 | \$29,636 |

| | Projection FY25 | Actual FY25 | Difference FY25 | Actual FY24 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Technology for Schools | | | | |
| NWEA MAP Test | \$14,400 | \$7,871 | ↑ \$6,530 | \$13,351 |
| Panorama Education | \$11,500 | \$0 | ↑ \$11,500 | \$10,625 |
| Infinite Campus | \$21,789 | \$22,024 | ↓ (\$235) | \$19,615 |
| Lottrease | \$2,625 | \$4,614 | ↓ (\$1,989) | \$6,669 |
| Epicenter | \$40,646 | \$34,210 | ↑ \$6,436 | \$33,710 |
| College-Readiness Diagnostics | \$4,725 | \$2,520 | ↑ \$2,205 | \$4,500 |
| Board on Track | \$35,000 | \$27,495 | ↑ \$7,505 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Technology for Schools | \$130,684 | \$98,734 | \$31,951 | \$88,470 |

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|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Technology for MCSC | | | | |
| Office of Information Technology | \$3,675 | \$7,703 | ↓ (\$4,028) | \$8,636 |
| Cell Phone Services | \$2,730 | \$1,522 | ↑ \$1,208 | \$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 | \$14,720 | \$2,460 | \$19,145 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Charter School Innovation/Collaboration | | | | |
| Innovation Fund/Professional Development | \$40,000 | \$21,042 | ↑ \$18,958 | \$0 |
| Board & Schools Meetings & Events | \$1,700 | \$517 | ↑ \$1,183 | \$1,511 |
| CountMe In | \$1,500 | | ↑ \$1,500 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Charter School Innovation/C | \$43,200 | \$21,559 | \$21,641 | \$1,511 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Sta-Cap | | | | |
| Sta-Cap | \$10,264 | \$4,339 | ↑ \$5,925 | \$3,597 |
| TOTAL Sta-Cap | \$10,264 | \$4,339 | \$5,925 | \$3,597.28 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Contingency | | | | |
| Contingency | \$21,000 | | ↑ \$21,000 | \$0 |
| TOTAL Contingency | \$21,000 | \$0 | \$21,000 | \$0 |

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Bylaw Amendment Request

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section: | X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance |
| Item: | B. To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Bylaw Amendment Request |
| Purpose: | Vote |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | Maine Arts_Amendment Guide for Amending the School's Bylaws.pdf |

MCSC

MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Charter Amendment Guide for Amending the School's Bylaws

Please Note – The school's Amendment Request must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the next MCSC Business Meeting (held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month) in order to make it onto the agenda. In some cases, 3 weeks may not allow enough time for review and schools are encouraged to contact the office with questions.

Maine Charter School Commission
182 State House Station
Augusta, Maine
04333-0182
www.maine.gov/csc

Maine Charter School Commission Charter Amendment Cover Sheet Request to Amend Bylaws

School Information

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Request | April 14, 2025 |
| School Name and Mailing Address | Maine Arts Academy 310 Cony Road Augusta Maine |
| Contact | Heather King |
| Contact telephone number | 207-480-7917 |
| Contact email address | hking@maineartsacademy.org |

Provide a brief narrative description of the request.

We have 4 sections that the board voted on April 9, 2025 to update. The changes are reverting back to the last version of the bylaws. The updates will ensure that term limits are in place for board members and officers and that the executive committee is delineated with who can serve as a member on it.

*The completed Amendment Request **must** be uploaded and submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission through Epicenter.*

On an additional page, please address the following criteria in your request, as applicable.

- o Provide a redlined copy of the proposed changes to the current bylaws.

- o Provide a finalized, clean version of the bylaws with the proposed changes included.
- o Describe why the school has proposed the changes to its bylaws.

We have 4 sections of our bylaws that have been updated by the board of directors. The board took a careful look at each section to see what updates should be made that best fits the growth of the Maine Arts Academy board of directors.

- o Describe the desired improvements that will result from the change in the school's bylaws.

In **Article IV**, the board has a lengthy thorough discussion regarding changing the current director's terms of 4 consecutive terms back to **3 terms**. Although there is a historical value to our board composition that allows for some board members who have been with the school since its inception to hold historical facts and experiences that guide Maine Arts Academy, the board still feels that 3 consecutive terms is fair and allows for movement on the board for fresh ideas and people.

The Changes in **Article VII** reverts officers back to term limits. There was extensive discussion regarding this as well and it was determined that the officers serving should have limits to allow for movement on the board to gain fresh ideas.

The changes in **Article IX** also reiterate term limits for board members.

The changes in **Article VIII** clarify members of the executive committee delineating that the executive committee members should be board officers.

REDLINED VERSION

Article IV, Section 3 Term and VoteThereafter, Board members shall serve three-year terms with approximately one-third of the Directors elected at each annual meeting. Each Director

shall hold office until the annual meeting when his or her term expires and until his or her successor has been elected and qualified, except in cases of death, resignation or removal of the Director. No Director shall serve more than **three** consecutive terms, after which they must take a minimum of **one** year off from serving as a Director before being eligible to be reconsidered for nomination as a Director.....

Article VII, Section 2 Election and Term for Officers The Governance Committee shall present a slate of officers to the Board of Directors. All officers shall be elected by the Directors at their annual meeting and shall hold office for a term of one year. Each officer shall continue in office until his or her successor has been elected and qualified, or until his or her death, resignation, or removal. An officer may serve more than one term in the same office **but no more than three consecutive terms in the same office. (being added back in)**

ARTICLE VIII

COMMITTEES

Section 1. General. By resolution, the Board of Directors may create committees and task forces as needed in addition to the standing committees noted in Section 2 below. These additional committees and or task forces may consist of persons who are not members of the Board and shall act in an advisory capacity to the Board.

Section 2. Standing Committees

(a) Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will consist of the **board officers**. Except for the power to amend the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall have all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the intervals between meetings

of the Board of Directors, subject to the direction and control of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX

EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS

Section 1. Contracts and Instruments. Contracts and other instruments (not including routine instruments) to be executed by the Corporation shall be signed, unless otherwise required by law, by the President. The President, signing alone, is also authorized and empowered to execute in the name of this Corporation all routine instruments arising in the day to day operation of the business of this Corporation. The Board of Directors may authorize any person or persons, whether or not an officer of the Corporation, to sign any contract or other instruments, and may authorize any such officer or other person to delegate, in writing, all or any part of such authority to any other person or persons.

Section 2. Notes, Checks, and the Like. All notes, drafts, acceptances, checks, endorsements and all evidence of indebtedness of the Corporation shall be signed by the Treasurer or other such person or persons and in such manner as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine.

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Clean Version

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Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of the Request to Incur Debt Rubric

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section: | X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance |
| Item: | C. To Consider the Approval of the Request to Incur Debt Rubric |
| Purpose: | Vote |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | Request to Incur Debt Rubric (3).pdf |

Maine Charter School Commission Request to Incur Debt Rubric

The Maine Charter School Commission will use this rubric to evaluate requests from Maine charter public schools to take out new debt, consolidate existing debt, or draw on an extended line of credit.

Required Documents

Charter schools seeking to incur new debt, consolidate existing debt, or draw on an extended line of credit must submit the following documents:

1. **Completed "Request to Incur New Debt Form"** – This form must be submitted through the Commission's document submission platform at least three weeks before the Commission Meeting where the vote will occur.
2. **Letter of Commitment from the Lender** – A formal commitment letter from the lending institution.
3. **Minutes from the School Board Meeting** in which the Board voted to incur the debt.

Additional Amendment Requests

If the request to incur debt includes any other amendments, such as adding a new school facility or increasing student enrollment, those completed amendment requests must be submitted through Commission's document submission platform within the required timelines for those amendments.

Process Overview

1. **Initial Conversation Between the School and Commission Staff:** Before a school submits a formal Request to Incur Debt, we recommend an initial meeting with Commission staff. This meeting provides an opportunity for a preliminary assessment of the school's financial, enrollment, and academic performance to gauge the likelihood of approval. Given that the criteria for approval are rigorous, this step helps schools determine whether moving forward is advisable before investing significant time and resources.
2. **Staff Review:** The Commission staff will review the request and complete a draft of the rubric.
3. **Committee Review:** The Finance Committee and School Performance Committee will review the request and finalize the rubric.

4. **Recommendation:** The Finance Committee will present a recommendation to the full Commission for a vote.
5. **Full Commission Vote:** The full Commission will vote to approve or deny the request. A majority vote is required for approval.

| Category | | Does Not Meet | Meets with Conditions | Meets |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Finance | Plan of Financing and Use of Borrowed Funds | No clear description of how the funds will be used. No specific improvements outlined. | Funds usage is somewhat described, but lacks detail or clear connection to needed improvements. | Clear description of how funds will be used to improve operations or facilities with defined goals. |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Details of Borrowing | No details provided about the borrowing agreement or terms. | Some borrowing details provided, but lacks clarity or key terms (e.g., interest rate, terms, etc.). | Borrowing details are clear, including lender, amount, interest rate, and term, with some information on covenants, <u>including a commitment letter or proposal.</u> |
| | Summary of Existing Debt | No summary or insufficient information on current debt. | Basic summary of existing debt with some missing details. | Clear summary of current debt, including balances, terms, and interest rates, and payment schedules. |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Support and Analysis of Capacity to Repay | No discussion of financial capacity or stability. No plans or projections provided. | Basic discussion of financial capacity, with some reference to enrollment and/or philanthropic support. | Adequate discussion of financial capacity, including enrollment history, future plans, and philanthropy. |
| | History of Responsible Fiscal Decisions | No history or record of responsible fiscal management or decision-making. | Some evidence of fiscal responsibility, but a history of inconsistencies or missed financial obligations. | Consistent history of sound fiscal management and decision-making, with clear evidence of timely debt servicing and financial planning. The school is not on a corrective action plan related to finances. |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Three-Year Projection of Statement of Activities | No projection provided. | Incomplete or unclear projections of financial activities. | Detailed three-year projections of statement of activities, including debt service for existing and new obligations. In the last three years, debt services obligations were not high risk. |
| | Schedule of Projected Financial Performance Measures | No financial performance measures included. | Limited or unclear financial performance measures with little supporting data. | Adequate schedule of projected financial performance measures, including key metrics like debt service ratio, cash flow, etc. |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Board Consideration</p> <p>The School Board has not demonstrated adequate review of financing terms and did not seek or document advice from legal counsel.</p> <p>There is no record of a formal vote authorizing the school to incur debt.</p> <p>The process lacks transparency and raises concerns about governance and financial oversight.</p> | <p>The School Board has reviewed the financing terms but has not sufficiently documented legal review or has only partially engaged legal counsel.</p> <p>A vote may have taken place, but minutes or documentation are incomplete, or the rationale for the decision is unclear.</p> <p>Additional due diligence may be necessary to ensure informed decision-making.</p> | <p>The School Board has thoroughly reviewed the financing terms and considered the advice of legal counsel.</p> <p>The Board formally voted to approve incurring the related debt, with records of the discussion and decision clearly documented.</p> |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Renewal | Likelihood of renewal | The debt payoff is projected to continue beyond the school's next renewal cycle, and there is insufficient evidence—based on the school's current Performance Framework results—that the school will meet the criteria for renewal. | The debt payoff is projected to continue beyond the school's next renewal cycle. While some aspects of the Performance Framework suggest the school may be renewed, the overall evidence is limited or mixed, raising concerns about renewal viability. | The debt payoff will continue through the school's next renewal cycle; however, there is reasonable evidence—based on the school's current and historical performance on the Performance Framework—that the school is likely to meet the criteria for renewal. |
| Enrollment | Ability to Define and Hit Enrollment Targets | No clear enrollment targets defined or inability to meet past enrollment targets. | Enrollment targets are defined but past performance shows significant challenges in meeting targets. | Clear enrollment targets defined, with a history of meeting or exceeding these targets. |
| Mission | Strength of Mission Alignment with Borrowing | No connection between the requested funds and the school's mission. | Funds usage is described but the alignment with the mission is unclear or | Clear connection between the requested funds and how they will |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | not well defined. | support and strengthen the school's defined mission. |
|--|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|

Draft

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of the Policy Defining a School, Campus, and Facility

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section: | X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance |
| Item: | D. To Consider the Approval of the Policy Defining a School, Campus, and Facility |
| Purpose: | Vote |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | DRAFT Definition of a School (2).pdf |



POLICY: Definition of School, Campus, and Facility

ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:

MOST RECENTLY UPDATED: April 10, 2025

PURPOSE

In accordance with [Title 20-A M.R.S. §2412](#) of Maine education law, each public charter school functions as its own Local Education Agency (LEA) and is considered a school administrative unit independent from any school district in which it is located. Specifically:

- Section 2.B(1) states:
"The public charter school functions for all purposes as a local educational agency and is a school administrative unit independent of the school administrative unit in which the school is located."
- Sections 1.B and 1.C further clarify:
"A charter contract may include one or more schools, to the extent approved by the authorizer and consistent with applicable law... A single governing board may be issued one or more charter contracts. Each public charter school operating under its own contract is a discrete legal entity, separate and distinct from any others."

This policy defines the terms **school**, **campus**, and **facility** to guide the Maine Charter School Commission's decision-making on charter amendments and expansion proposals.

DEFINITIONS

School

A *school* is a nonprofit entity governed by a board of trustees and authorized by the Maine Charter School Commission through a charter and a charter agreement. The school is responsible for delivering its educational mission, meeting defined goals, and complying with legal and contractual requirements. Each charter public school



is issued a unique LEA identifier by the Maine Department of Education. A school may operate one or more campuses under a single charter, subject to Commission approval. Under current state law, there is a cap of 10 charter public schools in Maine.

Single-Campus School

A *single-campus school* serves a defined grade span and is characterized by a unified educational program, a single set of performance goals, and a clear progression for students across grade levels and most likely operates from one facility.

Multi-Campus School

A *multi-campus school* operates two or more campuses under a single charter. Each campus may serve the same or different grade spans and may be located in different facilities. Each campus must maintain distinct student data and may have tailored goals and performance metrics.

Facility

A *facility* refers to a physical structure used by a school to house one campus. A facility may be temporary or permanent.

POLICY

LEA and Campus Identifiers

Pursuant to Maine Department of Education policy, each charter school will be assigned a unique **LEA identification number**. Additionally, **each campus** operated under that charter will be assigned a distinct **campus identification number**. Each campus must report separate data to the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Charter School Commission, as noted in [Title 20-A M.R.S. §2409](#).

Performance Evaluation

Each campus will be evaluated based on campus-specific academic goals and expectations, as defined in the school's charter and charter agreement. The Commission will also evaluate the school as a whole to assess overall performance and compliance.

Enrollment and Matriculation



Students enrolled at one campus of a multi-campus school may have priority enrollment to another campus of the same school because the students are already enrolled in the school. If a campus lacks sufficient capacity, it may hold an internal lottery among students from other campuses prior to conducting an external lottery.

APPLYING FOR MULTI-CAMPUS STATUS

A charter school seeking to operate multiple campuses must apply for a **charter amendment** through the Maine Charter School Commission. Each proposed campus must meet the definition above. Upon approval, the amended charter must include:

- The name of each campus
- Grade levels served (or to be served)
- Campus location

The Commission will vote to approve or deny the amendment based on required submitted documentation.

Relatedly, Amendments Requiring Commission Approval Include:

- Acquiring or expanding into a new facility;
 - Incurring debt;
 - Modifying enrollment outside of the contracted enrollment range;
 - Leadership structure;
 - Bylaws;
 - Mission statement; and
 - Customized framework targets.
-



COMMISSION APPROVAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Norm Higgins

Chair, Maine Charter School Commission

DISCLAIMER

This policy is intended to provide general information and guidance regarding charter school definitions and expansion. It does not constitute legal, financial, or professional advice. Schools should seek independent counsel as appropriate.

Acknowledgement: Portions of this policy were adapted from language approved by the D.C. Board of Education.

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:

MCA Governing Board Member Information Sheet_N. Peluso_SIGNED.pdf

Public Charter School Governing Board Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School: Maine Connections Academy

Name of Board Member: Nicole Peluso

Email Address: nlhpeluso@gmail.com

Occupation: Full-time parent and Learning Coach

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Why do you wish to serve on the governing board?

Maine Connections Academy provides a beneficial educational environment for my children. As a strong supporter of school choice for families in Maine, I look forward to contributing to the MCA school community by serving on the MCA Board

1. What is your understanding of the educational needs of students in the catchment area?

As a parent of three currently enrolled MCA students, I understand the importance of having a school that provides personalized, learner-centered education, that meets students where they are at in their educational journey and maximizes each student's potential.

1. Please list any previous or present educational involvement; such as board member, budget committee, citizens committees, etc. List school(s) or district(s).

I have dedicated the last 15 years to raising my children, serving as their primary caregiver and full-time Learning Coach. I have been actively involved in a volunteer capacity at schools they have attended.

1. What special qualifications do you have that will help you to be a board member?

I am personally invested in the success of Maine Connections Academy, and I look forward to providing a Learning Coach perspective on matters considered by the Board

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

I understand I will participate in setting vision and policy for the school, overseeing the performance of the school administration in implementing school policies, and providing fiduciary oversight of school operations. I will attend Board meetings and vote on matters requiring Board oversight.

Sign

Nicole Peluso

Date

6/5/2025

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.