



Maine Charter School Commission

Monthly Commission Meeting

Published on November 7, 2025 at 9:39 AM EST

Date and Time

Wednesday November 12, 2025 at 1:00 PM EST

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		Leigh Albert
C. To Consider the Approval of the 10/14/25 Commission Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Leigh Albert
II. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda		
A. Additions/Adjustments	Discuss	Leigh Albert
III. Committee Reports		
A. School Performance Committee	FYI	Tori Kornfield
B. Finance Committee	FYI	Brian Langley
C. Executive Committee	FYI	Leigh Albert
IV. Public Comment*		
A. Public Comment	Discuss	Leigh Albert
V. Presentation(s)		
• <i>None</i>		
VI. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report		
A. School Updates	Discuss	Lana Ewing
B. Organizational Updates	Discuss	Lana Ewing
C. Media Updates	FYI	Lana Ewing
• <i>None</i>		

	Purpose	Presenter
--	---------	-----------

VII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

- *None*

VIII. Unfinished Business

- *None*

IX. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|------|--------------|
| A. | To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports | Vote | Leigh Albert |
|-----------|--|------|--------------|

- SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports' Portfolio Summary
- SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports' Financial Summary
- SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports
 - ACADIA Academy
 - Baxter Academy for Technology and Science
 - Community Regional Charter School
 - Ecology Learning Center
 - Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences
 - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences
 - Maine Arts Academy
 - Maine Connections Academy
 - Maine Virtual Academy

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|------|--------------|
| B. | To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report | Vote | Leigh Albert |
|-----------|---|------|--------------|

- SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|------|--------------|
| C. | To Consider Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Request to Amend Bylaws | Vote | Leigh Albert |
|-----------|--|------|--------------|

- MeANS Request to Amend Bylaws

Purpose Presenter

X. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)**A.** New Governing Board Members FYI Leigh Albert

- *ACADIA Academy (Mary Morrissey Torsch)*

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board FYI Leigh Albert

- *Ecology Learning Center (Justin MacDonald)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Sally Beaulieu)*

C. Board Member Term Outs FYI Leigh Albert

- *ACADIA Academy (Amy Dieterich)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Erin Brown)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Robert Dodge)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Kimberly Patnode)*

XI. Future Topics**A.** Future Topics FYI Leigh Albert

December

- No meeting

January

- 10/1 Enrollments
- Annual Boards and Commissions Report
- Mid-Year Annual Calendar Progress Checks

XII. Announcements**A.** Important Dates FYI Leigh Albert**Upcoming Professional Development**

- *November 13, 2025 (9:30am to 12:00pm) for School Leaders*

Purpose	Presenter
---------	-----------

- *Why Communications and Advocacy Matters*
- *January 26, 2026 (9:00-10:30am) for School Leaders*
 - *How to Host a Successful Policy Maker Visit and Engage Your Board*
- *February 10, 2026 (10:00am-12:00pm) for Board Members and School Leaders*
 - *Strategic Planning: Mid-Year Update*
- *February 11, 2026 (10:00am-12:00pm) for Commission Members*
 - *Revisit MCSC Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, and Performance Framework*

Other

- *May 2, 2026 (11:00am-1:00pm)*
 - *Maine Arts Academy 10-Year Anniversary Gala*

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)	FYI	Leigh Albert
--	-----	--------------

- *December - No Meeting*
- *January - ZOOM Only*
- *February - Room #103/Cross Office Building, Augusta*

XIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting	Vote	Leigh Albert
---------------------------	------	--------------

* 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 10/14/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	C. To Consider the Approval of the 10/14/25 Commission Meeting Minutes
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for Monthly Commission Meeting on October 14, 2025

DRAFT



Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 14, 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."***

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.

Directors Present

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

Directors Absent

Brian Langley

Guests Present

Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

James joined at 1:05

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Leigh Albert called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Oct 14, 2025 at 1:01 PM.

Tom read the Commission's Mission and Vision Statements.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 9/9/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve the minutes from the Monthly Commission Meeting on 09-09-25.

Jim Handy seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Tom Keller Aye

Jim Handy Aye

Brian Langley Absent

Leigh Albert Aye

Tori Kornfield Aye

James Ford Absent

Norm Higgins Aye

II. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None

III. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori reported the School Performance Committee reviewed staff developed reports and discussed the following:

- Maine Arts Academy's Charter Renewal - The Committee recommends renewing with one recommendation.
- ACADIA Academy's Charter Renewal - The Committee recommends renewing with two recommendations.
- Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt - The Committee does not recommend approval.

B. Finance Committee

Lana reported the Finance Committee discussed the following:

- Maine Arts Academy's Charter Renewal
- ACADIA Academy's Charter Renewal
- Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt
- The Commission's Public Instrumentality Structure Status
- Moxie Public Charter School Grant Funding

C. Executive Committee

Leigh reported the Committee discussed the following:

- Maine Arts Academy's Charter Renewal
- ACADIA Academy's Charter Renewal
- Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt
- The Commission's Public Instrumentality Structure Status
- Moxie Public Charter School Grant Funding

IV. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

None

V. Presentation(s)

A. Maine Arts Academy and ACADIA Academy

Maine Arts Academy - Heather King thanked the Commission members, Lana and Amy for their support during the renewal process. She thanked the Maine Arts Board members along with the school's families. She pledged to foster continual improvement by listening to constructive criticism. Tori and Leigh provided positive feedback. Jim

noted the impressive Community engagement exhibited by the school. Heather noted that they are delving into the results of Panorama for students.

ACADIA Academy - Heather Bucklin noted the school's strong family connections and small school feel. She noted the goal to create a more diverse student population.

Meredith Morrison, Board Chair thanked Lana and Amy for their support during the renewal process. She thanked the ACADIA staff, teachers and families for the commitment to collaboration. The school has worked to strengthen the financial viability recently and now looks toward improving instructional leadership and fostering an environment of feedback and support where both students and teachers thrive. There has been a transition in board leadership this year with the last founding board member terming out. The current board is energized to define the new era of leadership.

VI. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana provided the following school updates:

Baxter Academy - Flex Friday kicks off this Friday morning. Students will pitch their projects that deepen their STEM discipline and emphasize real world impact. The projects include an EMT internship, an educational sci-fi book project, algae cultivation experiments, and search & rescue drone development.

MeANS - Seasonal intensives with activities surrounding a chosen theme are on-going. This fall the themes are:

- 9th grade - farming.
- 10th grade - apples.
- 11th grade - rivers.
- 12th grade - ocean.

MeArts Academy - A youth drug and alcohol awareness night was held on October 6.

The school executed an extended learning grant of \$76,000 and partnered with the local business including the Maine Crime Lab, NBC News, Drummond & Woodsum Law Firm, a hair salon and a local restaurant to provide hands-on job experiences.

MCA - The school held an in person social day with many activities at Fort Williams Park.

MeVA - The school continues to develop their virtual help desk which offers twice a day on-line tutoring.

Moxie Public Schools has secured \$1.25M in funding so far from national and local funders.

Tom mentioned that Houlton and Bangor are exploring distance learning and suggested the two virtual schools could offer expertise and collaborate with the public schools on their experiences.

B. Organizational Updates

Lana will be attending the NACSA conference this month.

Board on Track's Mike Mizzoni held a Professional Development session for school boards. More opportunities will be available during the year. The next session will be held on October 28.

Staff activity has focused on the Renewals, Annual Reports and the Change to a Public Instrumentality Structure.

- Lana thanked the schools for meeting renewal deadlines, etc.
- Annual Reports - drafts are complete and will come before the Commission in November.
- Implementation of Public Instrumentality - The Commission has received a check for funds including carryover and is working to set up bank accounts.

C. Media Updates

VII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. SY2024-25 Year End Unenrollment/Enrollment

Amy reviewed the Unenrollment / Enrollment Report for SY24-25

2003 students enrolled during the year which is 113 more students than the previous year. The report shows that the charter schools enroll students every month throughout the year.

504 students left schools, a slight increase from last year, but in proportion to the increase in enrollees.

Amy noted that the data shows students enrolling each month of the school year. She is working on further analysis to compare enrollment / unenrollment trends with traditional public schools to inform the discussion about using 10/1 enrollments for the state subsidy calculation.

Leigh noted that the 10th grade has the highest number of unenrolling students and wondered where they might be going and how does the data aligns with traditional public schools. She suggested a year over year analysis will be helpful.

VIII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy's Renewal Application

Tom Keller made a motion to approve ACADIA Academy's Renewal Application.

Jim Handy seconded the motion.

Lana provided a summary of the school's renewal application. She pointed out that the Performance Framework provides the lens for the Commission's evaluation. The Staff recommends approval based on the following results:

- Performance - ACADIA has maintained strong results in reading, attendance, and student persistence. Small group instruction is a strength.
- Achievement - The reading results have consistently met expectations on state and NWEA assessments. Math results are improving with a new math curriculum and targeted professional development is underway this year.
- Attendance and Persistence - Attendance rates exceed local and state averages and persistence year to year is high. The Commission makes a recommendation that the school improve equitable access to diversify their student population.
- Governance & Leadership - The Board is engaged and connected to the school community.
- Organizational & Financial Stability - Accounting practices have stabilized and recent audits are clean.
- Stakeholder Engagement - Panorama results show need of improvement although the Focus group meetings reflected stronger satisfaction. The Commission recommends building leadership capacity to provide consistent staff support to strengthen Panorama survey results.

Jim commented the leadership team is small and recommends the addition of a Dean of Students position for extra support. He also pointed out the school's ethnicities do not match community.

Tom suggested that professional development for math should be on-going.

Leigh appreciated the school board's recognition of the need to focus on finances, its current stability and the need to advance diversity.

Joe Drago noted the strength of the board's finance committee and its decision not to take on more debt was wise.

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

Roll Call

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

B. To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Renewal Application

Jim Handy made a motion to approve Maine Arts Academy's Renewal Application.

Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.

Lana provided a summary. She pointed out that the Performance Framework provides the lens for the evaluation. The Staff recommends renewal based on the following results:

Strong Academic and Arts outcomes - The school exceeds expectations in reading, subgroup performance, graduation rates, and college readiness. Reading results surpass the state average by more than 30 percentage points. Math achievement is improving and is a focus area for the school.

Engagement and Persistence - The school meets or exceeds expectations for both measures. Chronic absenteeism is well below the state and county averages. The Commission recommends the school balances gender representation in its enrollment.

Arts Integration and Community Impact - Students engage in frequent community performances and showcases and enrollment demand outpaces capacity.

Governance & Operational Sustainability - The board is active and effective, supporting strategic growth and oversight.

Financial Sustainability - The school's financial management is strong. They have received clean audits and maintain a stable cash flow. Their investment in a permanent facility has marked a major milestone in long term sustainability.

Tori commented the Commission is pleased with the performance of the school and the community integration. She noted the gender difference is high. Heather relayed the middle school has increased the number of boys

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

Roll Call

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

C. To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt

Tori Kornfield made a motion to Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt.

Jim Handy seconded the motion.

Lana summarized that CRCS is requesting to incur \$187,500 in debt to purchase land for a consolidated school.

The school recently withdrew from a proposed Waterville property purchase with no loss of funds as the Commission and the Waterville City Council did not support the move.

CRCS has continued express interest in consolidating its campus into a single facility in the future and the school has agreed to Commission recommended conditions as they consider land.

- The land must be within 10 miles of current location.
- No major new debt can be incurred or construction begun until after its renewal next year.

CRCS has identified a parcel of land within 10 miles of its current campuses, and they are interested in purchasing it. Financing would include \$187,500 of debt for a \$287,500 purchase with \$100,000 down payment. The land could be liquidated if circumstances change.

The School Performance Committee recommends not to approve.

Tori noted the Committee recommends the school put attention on performance rather financing at this time.

Norm commented the Finance committee looked at the request from a financial perspective and decided since the monies could be recouped if needed by a sale of the purchased land, the Committee supported the request.

Leigh stated she wants to support the school in the renewal process before the school takes on debt to support a new facility.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

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

D. To Consider Approval Allowing Lana Ewing and Amy Allen to Receive and Manage Funds and sign checks on behalf of the Maine Charter School Commission

Jim Handy made a motion to allow Lana Ewing and Amy Allen to receive and manage funds and sign checks on behalf of the Maine Charter School Commission.

Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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

A. New Governing Board Members

Leigh recognized new Governing Board Members:

- Margaret Micolichak at Ecology Learning Center
- Scott Richardson at Maine Virtual Academy

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board

Leigh noted that Nicole Peluso of Maine Connections Academy has left the Board.

C. Board Member Term Outs

None

X. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

November

- To Receive and Place on File SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Consider the Approval of the SY2024-25 Annual Report to the Commissioner

December

- No meeting

XI. Announcements

A. Important Dates

Upcoming Professional Development

- October 28, 2025 (10:00am-11:30am) for Board Members and School Leaders
 - Finding, Recruiting, Retaining, and Training Board Members to Meeting Your 3-5 Year Goals
- November 12, 2025 (9:30am-12:00pm) for Commission Members
 - Message and Media Training
- November 13, 2025 (9:30am to 12:00pm) for School Leaders
 - Why Communications and Advocacy Matters

Other

- **May 2, 2026 (11:00am-1:00pm)**
 - **Maine Arts Academy 10-Year Anniversary Gala**

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

- *November 12 (Room #103, Cross Office Building, Augusta or Zoom)*
- *December - No Meeting*

XII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Jim Handy made a motion to Adjourn the Meeting.

Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield Aye

Tom Keller Aye

Norm Higgins Aye

Jim Handy Aye

James Ford Aye

Leigh Albert Aye

Brian Langley Absent

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leigh Albert

Documents used during the meeting

- SY2024-25 Unenrollment-Enrollment Data .pdf
- ACADIA Academy Renewal Consideration Documents 10-9-25.pdf
- Maine Arts Academy Renewal Consideration Documents 10-9-25.pdf
- CRCS Amendment Request to Incur Debt.pdf
- CRCS Three Year Budget Projections FY26-FY28.pdf
- ELC - New Governing Board Member (Margaret Micolichek).pdf
- MeVA - New Governing Board Member (Scott Richardson).pdf

* 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 Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports

Section: IX. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance
Item: A. To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material:
SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports Portfolio Summary (1).pdf
SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report Financial Summary.pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - ACADIA Academy.docx (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Community Regional Charter School (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Ecology Learning Center (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Arts Academy (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Connections Academy (1).pdf
DRAFT SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Virtual Academy (1).pdf

SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports Portfolio Summary

In school year 2024-2025, charter districts were successful in the following areas of the Performance Framework:

- Data from the spring administration of the Maine Through Year Assessment is used to report proficiency outcomes and 6 of 10 schools/campus are **meeting** or **exceeding** reading expectations with several grade levels performing above state averages;
- Academic growth is strong with 5 of 6 schools/campus **meeting** or **exceeding** projected growth in Reading and 4 of 6 schools/campuses **meeting** or **exceeding** in Math
- 6 of 7 charter high schools are **meeting** or **exceeding** expectations for 4-year high school completion and surpassing the annual MDOE goal of 87%;
- The majority of charter high schools with reportable 5 and 6-year high school graduation rates are **exceeding** the state average of 89.1%;
- Charter high schools largely use the Accuplacer to assess for college-readiness and all are **meeting** or **exceeding** framework expectations;
- Subgroup performance is an area of strength across the portfolio.
- Successful participation in post-secondary activities continues to be strong with all charter high schools **meeting** or **exceeding** expectations - 4 schools report 100% successful completion;
- In the spring, schools use the Panorama survey to measure school climate and family engagement. Survey responses from all stakeholder groups (families, students, teachers, and staff) are in the **meeting** or **exceeding** expectations for 4 of 9 public charter schools;
- All charter school governing boards **meet** expectations for the number of meetings held throughout the school year;
- Public charter schools are required to provide data and submit reports to the Commission throughout the year using the Epicenter platform. 6 of 9 schools are **meeting** or **exceeding** expectations for timely reporting and submission accuracy.
- All facilities support programming;
- 9 of 9 charter schools submitted the required annual 3-year financial plan; and
- School persistence throughout the year and from year-to-year remains high with schools **meeting** or **exceeding** framework expectations;

Areas demonstrating required growth are as follows:

- Results from the spring administration of the Maine Through Year Assessment show that math proficiency continues to be a challenge across the portfolio with 9 of 10 schools/campuses **not meeting** or **approaching** framework expectations;

- Chronic absenteeism remains high with 4 of 9 schools **not meeting** or **approaching** expectations. (*On a positive note, 5 of 9 schools have chronic absenteeism rates that are below the state average.*);
- 3 of 3 schools with students in grades 3-5 are in the **not meeting** expectations range for responses on the required scales of the annual Panorama school climate and family engagement survey;
- Agendas for governing board meetings must be posted at least 5 days prior to a board meeting and meeting minutes posted no more than 5 days after approved - 7 of 9 governing boards are **approaching** or **not meeting** this expectation;
- Governing boards are expected to participate in annual training and professional development. 6 of 9 schools are **not meeting** this requirement.

Section 4: Financial Management and Viability
FY25

		ACADIA	Baxter	CRCS	ELC	FSAS	MeANS	MeAA	MCA	MeVA
Near Term Measures										
4.1.a	Current Ratio	2.6 = Lower Risk	1.6 = Lower Risk	1.6 = Lower Risk	1.0 = Moderate Risk	2.8 = Lower Risk	2.1 = Lower Risk	2.9 = Lower Risk	2.3 = Lower Risk	7.3 = Lower Risk
4.1.b	Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand	22 days = High Risk	47 days = Moderate Risk	47 days = Moderate Risk	30 days = Moderate Risk	37 days = Moderate Risk	36 days = Moderate Risk	36 days = Moderate Risk	99 days = Lower Risk	235 days = Lower Risk
4.1.c	Enrollment Variance	+2.0% = Lower Risk	+0.3% = Lower Risk	+1.0% = Lower Risk	+0.0% = Lower Risk	-8% = High Risk	-9% = High Risk	+3.0% = Lower Risk	+1.0% = Lower Risk	+3.0% = Lower Risk
4.1.d	Financial Obligations Default	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk	Not in Default = Lower Risk

Sustainability Measures

4.2.a	Total Margin	Current Yr is 0.7%; 3 Year is -3.4% High Risk	Current Yr is -0.1%; 3 Year is -0.4% High Risk	Current Yr is 2.2%; 3 Year is 1.4% Moderate Risk	Current Yr is -1.1%; 3 Year is 2.1% Moderate Risk	Current Yr is -3.9%; 3 Year is -4.2% High Risk	Current Yr is 2.2%; 3 Year is -1.8% High Risk	Current Yr is 1.1%; 3 Year is -2.1% High Risk	Current Yr is 2.6%; 3 Year is 0.8% Lower Risk	Current Yr is 0.7%; 3 Year is 6.2% Lower Risk
4.2.b	Debt to asset ratio	14% = Lower Risk	79% =Lower Risk	53% = Lower Risk	22% = Lower Risk	77% = Lower Risk	21% = Lower Risk	82% = Lower Risk	43% = Lower Risk	12% = Lower Risk
4.2.c	Cash Flow	2 Year Cash Flow is -151,805 High Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 110,625 Lower Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 268,805 Lower Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 147,063 High Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is -176,443 High Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is -269,787 High Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 162,387 Lower Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 275,572 Lower Risk	2 Year Cash Flow is 1,133,786 Lower Risk
4.2.d	Financial Obligations Coverage Ratio	5.6 = Lower Risk	1.2 = Lower Risk	1.4 = Lower Risk	1.2 = Lower Risk	0.1 = High Risk	1.8 = Lower Risk	1.2 = Lower Risk	2.9 = Lower Risk	1.3 = Lower Risk

Other

4.3	Financial Planning & Budgeting	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations	3 Year Budget Plan Submitted = Meeting Expectations
-----	--------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Section 4: Financial Management and Viability

FY25

ACADIA	The school has consistently met enrollment targets, maintained facilities, and demonstrated organizational stability. Financial performance was impacted by the transition away from John F. Murphy Homes for accounting services and unexpected costs from out-of-district placements. However, ACADIA has since stabilized finances, resolved outstanding liabilities, and strengthened internal financial systems. Clean annual audits with no findings have been a consistent strength.
Baxter	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Baxter Academy falls into the low to moderate risk on most financial criteria on the Performance Framework. Notably, the two-year cash flow metric has improved from a high risk result in FY24 to a low risk result this year. Only the three-year margin remains in the higher risk category mainly due to enrollment declines and the associated reduction in state subsidy in prior years. Baxter’s board continues to monitor this closely and is poised to reduce this risk. Baxter engaged the services of Nicholson, Michaud & Nadeau, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.
CRCS	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, CRCS is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. During the year, the school has explored options to combine their three campuses by purchasing property on which to build a new facility. The school engaged the services of RHR Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.
ELC	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, ELC falls in the low to moderate risk on all financial metrics with the exception of the two-year cash flow, which the board continues to closely review. During the year, the school found the cost of running the newly acquired Clifford Arts & Student Center was higher than anticipated while expected revenues were lower. The board has identified the creation of a strategic business plan for the facility as a key priority along with additional fundraising activities. ELC engaged the services of PGM Accounting and received a clean financial audit for FY24.
FSAS	Financial statements used to calculate 3rd Quarter outcomes were due on 5/15/25 and received on 8/20/25. Financial statements used to calculate 4th Quarter outcomes were due on 8/15/25 and received on 9/16/25. During FY25, FSAS contracted with a financial services firm to perform a review of its financial positions and manage its accounting functions. The school expects to meet deadlines and produce accurate reports during FY26. Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, 50% of the financial metrics on the Performance Framework were high risk. Lower enrollment for the SY24-25 resulted in a lower state subsidy for FY25 and an out of district placement drew down cash reserves. Enrollment has improved and the school has added a preschool class with 24 students which will boost the available subsidy in FY26. The school engaged the services of Runyon, Kersteen and Ouelette, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean financial audit for FY24, although the report indicated the school was not in compliance with their USDA loan reserve requirements as monthly payments into a cash reserve account were not made for six months during FY24. In addition, the report noted the school did not complete expenditure testing requirements on their Federal audit. FSAS created an updated system of compliance to rectify these deficiencies.
MeANS	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, MeANS falls in low to moderate risk on five of eight financial metrics. Enrollment, the three-year margin and two-year cash flows measures all fall in the high risk category. The board continues to closely monitor these metrics. Lower enrollment during FY25 reduced the state subsidy for FY26. The school generated an operating surplus in FY25 and anticipates the surplus will offset the lower FY26 revenue. MeANS also expects enrollment to increase and bring the school to a more secure financial position. MeANS engaged the services of Berry Dunn, BDMP Assurance LLP and received a clean financial audit for FY24.
MeAA	Financial management at Maine Arts Academy is sound. The school has consistently met its liabilities, including payroll, debt service, and benefits, and annual audits are clean with no findings. The purchase of a permanent, expansive facility in 2023 demonstrated long-term investment and stability, and the school has rebounded from the mid-term financial variability associated with that purchase.
MCA	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Maine Connections Academy is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. The school is able to maintain an efficient administrative team because of administrative support from Pearson. MCA excels at grant management, staying up to date with application, performance reports, and invoicing. The school engaged the services of RHR Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.
MeVA	Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Maine Virtual Academy is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. MeVA excels at grant management, staying up to date with application, performance reports, and invoicing. The school engaged the services of Wipfli, LLP and received a clean audit for FY24.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

ACADIA Academy

Board President: Meredith Morrison

Head of School: Heather Bucklin



NARRATIVE

ACADIA Academy, located in Lewiston, is in its tenth year of operation and serves 250 students from 18 cities and towns in the Lewiston/Auburn area.

18.4% of ACADIA students have an IEP while 32% of families are economically disadvantaged – just short of the state average in both categories.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading Growth and Proficiency
- Universal Groupings for Reading and Math
- Student Attendance
- Student Persistence
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly

Areas of Focus:

- Math Growth and Proficiency
- Academic achievement for economically disadvantaged students
- School Culture and Climate

Student Achievement

ACADIA Academy administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess student proficiency in Grades 3-6 and is meeting expectations in Reading, but not meeting expectations in Math. It is important to note that while the overall results aren't as strong as last year, students in grades 4 and 6 are outperforming their peers from across the state.

After having received two waivers for the administration of the NWEA MAP Growth Assessments, ACADIA was required to begin using it again in the Fall of 2024. The school met its expectations in Reading and Language Usage and is approaching framework expectations in math.

Subgroup performance remains strong with the exception of outcomes for Economically Disadvantaged students. This should be an area of focus for the school going forward.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be a strength for the school; continually meeting framework expectations year after year. In Androscoggin County, chronic absenteeism hovers around 28%, while ACADIA Academy reports that only 12% of its student population were considered chronically absent this past year.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. For the third year in a row, ACADIA Academy students and teachers responded unfavorably to the survey questions. Staff results have declined and are no longer meeting expectations, while family results are a bit more favorable than a year ago. We encourage the ACADIA governing board and administration to prioritize school climate and culture in the upcoming school year.

Organizational Sustainability

To begin SY2024-25, ACADIA Academy had a new school leader and governing board chair and as such several reporting requirements were late, resulting in the school not meeting expectations for reporting accuracy and timeliness. The school has since rebounded and put processes in place to ensure timely reporting going forward.

The ACADIA governing board meets regularly at the end of each month and posts board meeting agendas and approved minutes timely, with the exception of a few meeting agendas that were posted late this past year. While not meeting expectations for required annual board training, the ACADIA board completed 21 of its 27 requirements (78%) – an incredible improvement over last year’s completion percentage.

Financial Management and Viability

The school has consistently met enrollment targets, maintained facilities, and demonstrated organizational stability. Financial performance was impacted by the transition away from John F. Murphy Homes for accounting services and unexpected costs from out-of-district placements. However, ACADIA has since stabilized finances, resolved outstanding liabilities, and strengthened internal financial systems. Clean annual audits with no findings have been a consistent strength.

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence and recurrent enrollment continue to be strengths for the school, continuing to exceed framework expectations.



PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) - Grade 3 (Approaching) - 51% of ACADIA 3rd grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 61% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 4 (Meeting) - 66% of ACADIA 4th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 64% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 5 (Meeting) - 67% of ACADIA 5th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 66% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 6 (Exceeding) - 78% of ACADIA 6th grade students are “at or above state expectation” compared to 70% statewide per the Acacia platform	Meeting Between $\geq$-5% and $<$5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) - Grade 3 (Not Meeting) - 45% of ACADIA 3rd grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 63% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 4 (Not Meeting) - 23% of ACADIA 4th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 55% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 5 (Not Meeting) - 27% of ACADIA 5th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 53% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 6 (Approaching) - 32% of ACADIA 6th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 45% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting $<$-15% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) Students with IEPs (Meeting)	Meeting



- Male (Meeting) - Female (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Between $\geq$ -5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting)	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Meeting - 47%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Meeting - 45%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Approaching - 41%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Students with a 504 Plan (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Approaching)	Meeting Between 45% and 54.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Language Usage) - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Students with a 504 Plan (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Male (Not Meeting) - Female (Meeting)	Approaching Between 35% and 44.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Students with a 504 Plan (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Not Meeting)	Approaching Between 35% and 44.9%
Other	
Reading on Grade Level – 3 rd Grade	Reported as Required
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	12% - School Reported



School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results • School Climate - 20th Percentile • Safety - 50th Percentile • School Fit - 40th Percentile	Approaching 1 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results (Grades 3-5) • School Climate - 10th Percentile • Safety - 30th Percentile • Rigorous Expectations - 10th Percentile • Teacher-Student Relationships - 20th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey - Student Results (Grade 6) • School Climate - 10th Percentile • Safety - 90th Percentile • Rigorous Expectations - 10th Percentile • Teacher-Student Relationships - 20th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results • School Climate - 20th Percentile • Leadership - 10th Percentile • Professional Learning - 10th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 10th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results • School Climate - 10th Percentile • Leadership - 10th Percentile • Professional Learning - 20th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 10th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School develops + implements plan</i>	Meeting



Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	12 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agenda/0 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>67% on time; 98% accurate</i>	Not Meeting
Board Training - <i>27 requirements/21 completed (78%)</i>	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>22 Days Cash on Hand</i>	High Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	High Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	High Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

***Based on FY25 QTR 4 financials**

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - <i>247 of 253 Students (98%)</i>	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - <i>205 of 225 Students (91%)</i>	Exceeding



School Customization

ACADIA will improve social and emotional and academic outcomes for all students by building strong collaborative relationships between students and staff and staff teams through the implementation of the BARR framework	Not Meeting 158/241 (66%)
Students in grades K-2 will demonstrate strong writing growth on twice yearly assessments	Approaching 65%

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Introduction

As ACADIA nears the conclusion of our ninth year, we are proud of the accomplishments and growth we have seen. We continue to look at ways and means to improve and meet the challenges of the constantly changing educational landscape.

Mission, Vision, and Targeted Student Population

ACADIA strives to exemplify our mission and vision every day. We continue to focus on the whole child by incorporating social emotional learning across the day and in all areas of learning. Our teachers take the time to get to know their students and view them as individuals with specific needs and learning styles. Our leadership team supports teachers in creating engaging and multimodal learning experiences by securing the resources they need and allowing for flexibility in the schedule. Our exploratory learning block allows students to drive their learning and create projects shared in an exhibition three times per year. These events were extremely well attended this year, demonstrating our strong community culture and our families' active involvement.

Academic Performance

One highlight of our academic program is our Universal Groups. Students are grouped for reading and math based on their academic level, not grade level. This makes the instruction more targeted for specific student needs. Our students make consistent progress in reading and math as evidenced by curriculum-based measures, benchmark assessments, and standards-based assessments. Our students in grades 3-6 took the Maine Through Year assessment in the fall and the spring and performed within 10 points of the state average on reading and math. This year we were required to also administer the MAP Growth Test for students in grades K-6. We received a state waiver in the Fall of 2023 and the



entire 2024-2025 school year. The overall scores on the MAP Test were not what we had hoped. The leadership team will look at the data and the trends to see where we can offer instructional support that may help our students make greater growth. Our students in grades 3-6 may have been experiencing some testing fatigue as they spent the better part of eight hours testing in a two-week period. Fifth graders also took the Maine Science Assessment for an additional four to six hours.

We are in our second year of BARR implementation. This framework has been integral to our success as a team in supporting our students. Through the BARR system, every student in our building is discussed and has strengths identified and specific goals established. The framework streamlines team discussions and data collection. It has helped us to identify areas of need both academically and behaviorally so that we can collaborate to serve our students best. We were disheartened to learn that we would lose access to the valuable weekly coaching from our BARR Coach and the resources on the member portal in the upcoming school year due to the rescinding of funding for ARPA-funded projects. We will continue using the BARR model to drive team discussions about students and track growth data. We have been working with our BARR Coach to prepare for the transition to next year, so we are successful without in person coaching. The SEL Curriculum, U-Time, that is part of BARR, will also continue to be taught in all of our classrooms as it has proven very valuable in weaving a connection between all of the students in our building.

Climate and Discipline

Overall, our school climate is favorable. Student attendance is above average, and families are very involved and supportive of our program. Students are engaged, and teachers are making great efforts to keep their instruction dynamic and timely to contribute to the overall positivity. There is some work to be done with the staff to improve the culture, and this summer the leadership team will be working on ways to facilitate more positive feelings among staff members. There were also some specific, very challenging behaviors in one grade level this year that were difficult for the teachers and administration to navigate. This group struggles with more respectful and responsible behaviors than others. Interactions among students and with teachers were strained, and a culture of tension and unhappiness seemed to pervade those classrooms. Whole group behavior interventions were implemented without great success. This is something that leadership will also be working on during the summer, so that when that group of students goes into sixth grade, there are positive behavior supports in place and resources available for students and teachers so that their final year at ACADIA is a more positive experience.



Organizational Performance

As an organization ACADIA is strong and on a positive path for growth and future success. This year the administrative team of the new Executive Director, the Director of Operations and the Special Education Coordinator have collaborated and distributed tasks and responsibilities in a way that has made leading our school much more sustainable.

We have four new general education classroom teachers on staff this year who have melded with our existing staff well. We also created a new position of Business Manager this year which has been a great asset to the administrative team.

One of the challenges we find in retention of staff is our inability to meet the pay scale of local public schools. We have been informed by some who have left that they are leaving for the primary reason of securing a more lucrative income. This has also prevented us from being able to hire some of the teaching candidates we would like to. Our business manager is working to establish a pay scale that will more closely match the local school districts, and we hope to be able to gradually offer increases that will help us retain high quality teachers.

In preparation for the passing of LD1571 we have reviewed certification status with all of our teaching staff and have had discussions with them regarding how they wish to proceed. We have hired five new teachers for next year, all of whom hold certifications. Our current teachers have all been working at earning CEUs and applying for recertification. Our goal is that all General Education and Special Education teachers will hold a certification by the beginning of the next school year.

Last year our Panorama Survey response rates were quite low. This year we have made substantial efforts to increase the number of responses we receive from both families and staff. Currently our response rates are significantly higher than in the past and we are looking forward to analyzing the feedback we receive in order to improve our school for all of those we serve.

ACADIA Board of Trustees Overview

The ACADIA Board of Trustees is composed of individuals with diverse expertise and professional backgrounds, contributing to a well-rounded and strategic governance body.

Board Members:



- *Meredith Morrison – Director of Community Engagement and Insights, Harvard Graduate School of Education. Former public-school educator and charter school leader with a master’s in Instructional Leadership from HGSE.*
- *Kate Dumais – Background in K-8 education, higher education publishing, healthcare technology, and community services.*
- *Justin Good – Experience in finance, purchasing, and hospitality.*
- *Julie McCabe – Educator and current Maine House Representative.*
- *Amy Dieterich – Maine District Court Judge with a background in commercial litigation.*
- *Danielle Moreau – Medical coding specialist and childcare provider.*
- *Alicia Laroche – Expert in healthcare risk management and process improvement.*
- *Jon Mercier – Real estate professional.*
- *Aaron Landry – Licensed clinical social worker.*
- *Donald Dearborn – Biology professor and Associate Dean of Faculty [terming out May 2025].*

Board Capacity, Transparency, and Stewardship Summary

The ACADIA Academy governing board has experienced a period of transition over the past year, similar to the school’s leadership team. Several long-serving founding board members have completed their terms, including former board chairs, Sean Siebert and Chris Brann. We are deeply grateful to both for their years of dedicated service. Notably, Chris Brann continues to contribute his institutional knowledge and financial expertise as a parent member of the Finance Committee, providing critical continuity during this leadership transition.

With newer members stepping into leadership roles – namely Meredith Morrison (Chair), Kate Dumais (Vice Chair), and Justin Good (Secretary) – the board is actively learning and adapting to the responsibilities of effective governance. These members are building their knowledge and capacity in real time and working collaboratively with ACADIA’s school-based leadership to ensure strong oversight and mission alignment.

Despite this transitional phase, the board remains committed to effective stewardship and to strengthening its connection to the ACADIA community. We are building toward strengthening our presence at school-based events and celebrations, seeking opportunities to support operational needs, building relationships with families, and serving as visible ambassadors of both ACADIA and the broader charter school movement. We have a small admin team at ACADIA, and the Board is hoping to, where appropriate, fill any gaps the school needs.



Our board practices remain transparent and open to the community. We post meeting agendas and minutes in accordance with state requirements, hold open public meetings, and ensure that decisions and updates are communicated clearly to stakeholders. We are also working to further strengthen communication and community engagement efforts in the coming year as part of a broader strategy to enhance visibility and impact. Committees such as Finance and PTO are particularly strong, while the Membership Committee requires renewed focus. We are also looking at whether to potentially revise our current committee list to reflect our current priorities, for example, Strategic Planning and Fundraising.

While we have a diverse smattering of knowledge, expertise, and experience in our current board, we've also identified areas where we would like to see new board members with experience in (to support our current goals):

- *Human Resources*
- *Fundraising and Networking*
- *Grant Writing, ideally in education or ed-related fields*
- *Marketing, Graphic/Website Design, Social Media*
- *Transportation*

Board Leadership and Functioning

Meredith Morrison, our Board Chair, demonstrates strong leadership and commitment. She actively supports the administrative team, contributes to curriculum evaluation, and fosters accountability and collaboration.

Overall Board of Trustees Areas for Growth

- *Increase professional development opportunities for trustees.*
- *Enhance engagement outside of board meetings.*
- *Improve follow-through on delegated tasks, namely timely completion of required PDs.*
- *Implement ongoing evaluations and governance improvements.*

In sum, while our board is in a rebuilding and capacity-strengthening phase, we are actively developing our leadership, reinforcing strong governance practices, and maintaining a clear focus on supporting ACADIA's continued success and renewal.



Financial Performance

ACADIA is in a much stronger position financially than we have been in recent years. Last year we faced substantial challenges with the high out of district costs for students who we had to outplace for special education services. The number of students that are now outplaced has been reduced to three students, which creates significant savings for us. We were also faced with overdue invoice balances to our previous ESP, John F. Murphy Homes and Margaret Murphy Centers for Children. We have reduced that debt significantly and are on track to having that debt completely erased by June pending our high cost out of district funding comes in.

Our FY26 Budget is being developed now, and we are hopeful to have it passed at the May 28 Board of Trustees meeting. The financials look very strong, and we foresee no issues with presenting a zero balanced budget. We have taken steps to be able to bill Maine Care for some of the services provided to our students such as counseling, speech and BHP services. This will reduce some of our SPED costs and help make our budget even stronger.

Our PTO does a significant amount of fundraising for our school and is a huge support system for us. The group is willing to allocate funds to special purchases or to contribute to events such as field trips or guest presentations. Some grade levels do fundraise for their own field trips and events such as our fifth-grade group who raises funds each year to be able to take a trip to Boston in the Spring.

We are currently holding a school-wide fundraiser for the specific purpose of raising funds for a new math curriculum resource. We have discussed having a fundraising committee next year which would spearhead efforts to raise funds for specific needs by coordinating events and schoolwide campaigns. We are hopeful that this will be the start of a successful trend of increasing our annual revenues through fundraising.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board Chair: Ruth Dean

Executive Director: Anna Klein-Christie



NARRATIVE

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science, located in Portland, is in its thirteenth year of operation and serves 384 students from 59 cities and towns – from as far north as Boothbay, and as far south as York.

21.88% of Baxter students have an IEP - higher than the state average; while 20.05% of families are economically disadvantaged, lower than the statewide average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading, Math, and Science Proficiency
- Subgroup achievement
- College Readiness
- Graduation Rates (4, 5, and 6-Year Cohorts)
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly
- Student Persistence
- Flex Friday

Areas of Focus:

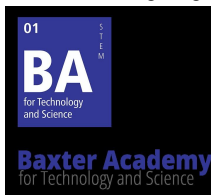
- Student Attendance
- Student School Culture and Climate
- Board Training

Student Achievement

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 10 and continues to exceed framework expectations - and outperform their statewide peers - in both subjects.

Subgroup performance remains extremely strong – with all groups exceeding framework expectations in reading and math - some outperforming state averages by nearly 30 percentage points.

The school uses both the Accuplacer and the SAT to measure college-readiness and 79% of students have met the college readiness indicators in both reading and math on the Accuplacer, and 88% on the SAT. Overall, most subgroups are meeting or exceeding framework expectations.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be an area where there's room for growth. Baxter reports that 27% of its students were chronically absent in SY2024-25, an increase from 20.74% a year ago. While Baxter enrolls students from Boothbay to York, the majority of their students reside in Cumberland County where the chronic absenteeism rate is approximately 19%.

Graduation rates remain strong. Baxter reports that 97% of seniors (4-year cohort) graduated in June, 99% of 5-year seniors, and 98% of 6-year seniors – consistently exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education.

82% of Baxter seniors successfully participated in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. For the first time this spring, Baxter students responded unfavorably to the survey questions. Family, teacher, and staff results remain strong. We encourage the Baxter governing board and administration to prioritize school climate and culture in the upcoming school year.

Organizational Sustainability

Baxter submits required documents to the Commission on time and accurately. The board is active - meeting regularly throughout the school year. Of the 21 board training requirements, only 13 were completed (62%) which does not meet performance framework expectations. This should be an area of focus for the board this upcoming school year.

The Commission requires the “timely posting of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes”. This is another area of the framework that the board should focus on, having not met framework expectations for several years in a row.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Baxter Academy falls into the low to moderate risk on most financial criteria on the Performance Framework. Notably, the two-year cash flow metric has improved from a high risk result in FY24 to a low risk result this year. Only the three-year margin remains in the higher risk category mainly due to enrollment declines and the associated reduction in state subsidy in prior years. Baxter's board continues to monitor this closely and is poised to reduce this risk. Baxter engaged the services of Nicholson, Michaud & Nadeau, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.



School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence continues to be a strength of the school, consistently exceeding framework expectations.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) Grade 10 - 67% of Baxter Academy high school students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 10 - 64% of Baxter Academy high school students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reported 97%	Exceeding
5-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reported 99%	Exceeding
6-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reported 98%	Exceeding



Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - 79% of students met college-readiness targets in both math and reading	Meeting
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Meeting)	Meeting
SAT - 88% of students met college-readiness targets in both math and reading	Meeting
SAT - Subgroups - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Meeting)	Meeting
Post-Secondary Activity Participation - School reported 82%	Exceeding
FAFSA Support - Baxter provided support to 81% of families/students	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	27% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 90th Percentile - School Fit - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results - School Climate - 20th Percentile - Safety - 70th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 20th Percentile - Teacher-Student Relationships - 40th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results School Climate - 99th Percentile	Exceeding



- Leadership - 90th Percentile - Professional Learning - 99th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Leadership - 99th Percentile - Professional Learning - 99th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 80th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	Meeting - 10 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agendas/0 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>95% on time; 100% accurate</i>	Exceeding
Board Training - <i>21 requirements/13 completed (62%)</i>	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>47 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	High Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	Low Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting



**Based on FY25 QTR 4 Financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

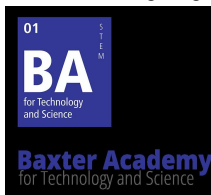
Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - <i>368 of 384 students (96%)</i>	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - <i>276 of 293 students (94%)</i>	Exceeding

School Customization

College Readiness - PSAT 10 and SAT 11 school average scores will meet or exceed the state average <i>PSAT 10:</i> • <i>State = 972; Baxter 929</i> <i>SAT 11:</i> • <i>State = 1038; Baxter = 1092</i>	Approaching Meets state average in either PSAT 10 or SAT 11, or the average school scores are within 100 points of the state average
Grade-Level Proficiency: Maine Through-Year Assessment <i>Math:</i> • <i>State = 1501; Baxter = 1511</i> <i>Reading</i> • <i>State = 1503; Baxter = 1506</i>	Exceeding Exceeds state averages in both ELA and Math; or in either ELA or Math
Science Proficiency: Maine Science Assessment • <i>State = 36; Baxter = 42</i>	Exceeding Exceeds state average
Flex Fridays • <i>Flex Friday Elevator Pitches on October 25, 2024</i> • <i>Flex Friday Shark Tank on February 7, 2025</i> • <i>Flex Friday Exhibitions Day 1 on May 19, 2025</i> • <i>Flex Friday Exhibitions Day 2 on May 20, 2025</i>	Exceeding

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

As a STEM charter high school in Southern Maine, Baxter Academy continues to lead with purpose and innovation in 2025 – despite growing competition, limited resources, and increasing challenges to the very foundation of public education.

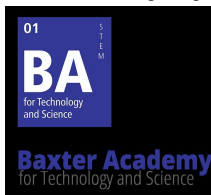


We teach our students to see challenges facing our community with clarity, intelligence, tenacity, and kindness. Our vision continues to be committed to the protection of space for them to engage deeply in solving real-world problems, to collaborate across disciplines, and to build the kind of solutions that matter – locally and globally. Our students work alongside committed community partners who recognize that their success is tied to the future of our region.

Baxter’s academic model continues to evolve in response to the complex landscape we operate in: demographic shifts, changing industry demands, and a growing “marketplace” of schools offering STEM programs. Our budget or our building does not define us – we are defined by the strength of our mission, the clarity of our vision, and the resilience of our learning community. We offer a rigorous and responsive program that blends traditional assessment with project-based learning, grounded in curiosity, inquiry, and real-world relevance.

A few recent successes:

- *Baxter Academy Students won 28 Maine Scholastic Art and Writing Awards in 2025*
- *Student received “Service before Self” award from the Portland Rotary*
- *Student awarded “Our Future South Portland” (poem to be the forward to the South Portland Comprehensive Plan and a poem published in the Portland Press Herald)*
- *Baxter Plastics Project held an art exhibit at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm (May-July)*
- *Students held their 2nd Annual Maker Fair with proceeds going to Baxter Academy*
- *Baxter Outliers won the New England First Robotics - Autonomous Robot Competition*
- *Students were featured on Maine Calling, MPBN*
- *Baxter Wheelchair Project received the Charter Commission Innovation Award Grant*
- *Students collaborated with a hospital in Western Kenya (Bondo) for the completion of their Flex Friday project*
- *Baxter Science Team awarded Scholarships and Gold & Silver awards at the Maine State Science Fair*
- *The Baxter Math Team was a finalist in the Statewide math meet*
- *The Baxter Chess Team represented Maine in the National Chess Championships in Washington, D.C.*
- *Baxter Academy hosted the AMC math competition for area schools*
- *Baxter Academy led its first Women in STEM meeting at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute*
- *Baxter Academy acquired the Baxter Van, which has made transport to field trips, nature immersion, scholarship competitions, and robotics work accessible. It has dramatically expanded our “real world offering” a reality.*



Baxter Academy offers an exemplary Education:

As a college preparatory school, we uphold a set of academic high-expectation norms that guide our entire community.

Students are expected to carry meaningful obligations to the community. This includes showing up for each other – demonstrating engagement during class and collaborative learning experiences, actively participating in teamwork, and stepping into leadership roles when needed. Preparation is key: students should be clear about what is needed for each class and ready to contribute as members of their learning community. Meeting deadlines and fulfilling expectations is another cornerstone; students are responsible for holding themselves accountable and following through on their commitments. We also expect thoughtful discourse and communication, which means listening, sharing, and facilitating conversations, while practicing respectful and professional written and verbal communication. Finally, care for peers matters deeply. Students are encouraged to be both self-aware and group-aware in learning environments, and to practice positive social management as part of a healthy and supportive community.

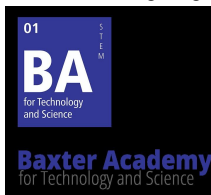
These expectations are not merely academic – they reflect the values that prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship. In honoring these norms, students learn to navigate complex challenges, collaborate across differences, and take ownership of their growth. The classroom becomes more than a place for content delivery; it becomes a space where curiosity, responsibility, and respect drive deeper learning.

Faculty and staff support these norms by modeling professionalism, providing clear guidance, and holding students accountable with consistency and compassion. Families, too, are essential partners reinforcing the importance of follow-through, resilience, and engagement beyond the school day. Together, we cultivate a learning environment where high standards are matched with high support. We believe every student can rise to these expectations – and that in doing so, they develop not only the academic skills but also the character and habits of mind that will serve them well for life.

Monitoring our progress:

Baxter is a collaborative community of educators dedicated to continuous growth. Faculty meet weekly – in full staff, department, and advisory teams – to improve instruction and support student well-being.

We start the year with three days of training (with added time for new teachers) and end with two days of reflection and planning. Two full PD days and a half day are held during the school year. This year, we've focused on portfolios, support for multilingual learners, and community partnerships.



Departments have clarified learning goals and growth measures, while faculty teams have advanced work in social-emotional learning and equity in STEM. This transition is working.

1. Enrollment

After build-back from COVID, Baxter has now reached full enrollment (399 students). This is the result of our increased successes in the community, expanded marketing, and word of mouth. Our retention rate is high.

2. Chronic Absenteeism

This continues to be a major issue nationwide. Our peer schools face even deeper challenges. Portland and Deering High Schools (both within the area) have Chronic Absenteeism rates of 35% and 47%, respectively. We believe that this is tied to mental health, post-COVID behaviors, and the natural connection within the school due to a lack of extracurricular activities. We continue to work hard to address this through collaboration with CountMEIn, strategic parent/teacher engagement, and expanded club activities. However, it should be noted that there are students who are chronically absent whose grades do not suffer.

3. Academic Performance

While student perceptions around academic rigor remain mixed, the outcomes tell a more compelling story. Retention is high. Baxter Academy students continue to outperform their peers statewide in math, science, and English Language Arts, as reflected in the most recent testing data. Our students are not only exceeding state expectations – they are graduating at higher rates, gaining admission to competitive colleges and universities, and earning recognition through statewide academic competitions. Their success also extends beyond traditional academics. Baxter students are securing internships with institutions like Maine Medical Center and FMI, building real-world skills in high-performance environments.

There is a gap between these measurable outcomes and how some students perceive the day-to-day classroom experience. This disconnect continues to inform our work as we ask: How can we link challenge and success more visibly and meaningfully for students?

We've taken several steps toward that goal. Cell phone use has been eliminated during instructional time, allowing for more focused engagement. Our Baxter Scholars Program has entered its second year with continued success. Flex Friday projects remain a dynamic part of our program and will evolve further this coming year, as students begin responding to RFPs submitted by our community partners – bringing relevance and ownership even more directly into their learning experience.



Baxter Academy continues to monitor and invest in women-in-stem participation. It is only through closely tracking this information that we have the opportunity to continue to make changes. Our current efforts include a women-in-stem annual (student-led/designed) conference, student presentations to our full staff, and course/curriculum planning.

4. Community Partnerships Matter

At Baxter Academy, our commitment to “The real world starts now” is a framework for how we connect students to the world around them. As a school rooted in our community, we partner with local organizations, industry leaders, and institutions to extend learning beyond the classroom in meaningful ways.

These partnerships take many forms: dual enrollment opportunities with colleges like Southern Maine Community College, Central Maine and Husson University; mentorship and internship placements with organizations such as ReVision Energy, Northern Light Hospital, and Greater Portland Council of Governments; and experiential learning with groups like Citizen’s Climate Lobby, the Portland Museum of Art, and Cold Current Kelp. The school has increased field trips so that teachers are taking students into the community every two weeks.

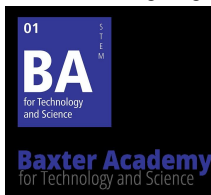
Whether our students are working with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, exploring food insecurity with Wayside Food Program and Good Shepherd Food Bank, or developing early STEM literacy with schools like Connors Elementary and Windham Middle School, they are engaging in real-world challenges and solutions.

These collaborations help students build skills, clarify interests, and see themselves as capable contributors in this moment.

<i>Inter-government Panel on Climate Change</i>	<i>Windham Middle School</i>	<i>Husson University</i>
<i>Greater Portland Council of Governments</i>	<i>Black Fern Tree Service</i>	<i>Cold Current Kelp</i>
<i>Greater Androscoggin Humane Society</i>	<i>Portland Museum of Art</i>	<i>Portland Pipeline</i>
<i>Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust</i>	<i>Maine Community Solar</i>	<i>Lighthouse Bikes</i>



<i>Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine</i>	<i>Harvey Mudd University</i>	<i>The Mainely Dog</i>
<i>Southern Maine Community College</i>	<i>Citizen's Climate Lobby</i>	<i>Smiling Hill Farm</i>
<i>Cumberland Chebeague Land Trust</i>	<i>Wayside Food Program</i>	<i>Wilburs of Maine</i>
<i>Central Maine Community College</i>	<i>Northern Light Hospital</i>	<i>ReVision Energy</i>
<i>Bath Fire & Rescue Department</i>	<i>Portland Public Library</i>	<i>The Green Ladle</i>
<i>Longfellow Elementary School</i>	<i>Flores</i>	<i>Fork Food Labs</i>
<i>FMI, a Spirit AeroSystems Co.</i>	<i>Portland Pie Company</i>	<i>A Path for Rails</i>
<i>Mr. Drew and His Animals Too</i>	<i>Pride's Corner Church</i>	<i>Seeds of Peace</i>
<i>Maine Principal's Association</i>	<i>Evo Rock and Fitness</i>	<i>Mercy Hospital</i>
<i>University of Southern Maine</i>	<i>Maine Medical Center</i>	<i>Shores Church</i>
<i>Maine Needs & Preble Street</i>	<i>Leavitt and Sons Deli</i>	<i>Blaze Partners</i>
<i>Community Housing of Maine</i>	<i>Two Fat Cats Bakery</i>	<i>The Bark Yard</i>
<i>Connors Elementary School</i>	<i>The Studio, Portland</i>	<i>EducateMaine</i>
<i>Maine Youth Action Network</i>	<i>Maine Venture Fund</i>	<i>Roux Institute</i>
<i>Wells Reserve at Laudholm</i>	<i>Coastal Accounting</i>	<i>Maine Monitor</i>
<i>Good Shepherd Food Bank</i>	<i>CyberStart America</i>	<i>Preble Street</i>
<i>1000 Drones for 1000 Girls</i>	<i>Maine Public Radio</i>	<i>Port Property</i>
<i>First Amendment Museum</i>	<i>Maine Boys to Men</i>	<i>Maine Needs</i>
<i>Blue Marble Geographics</i>	<i>Bangor Daily News</i>	<i>Spark's Ark</i>
<i>Partners for World Health</i>	<i>Breakwater School</i>	<i>Covetrus</i>



5. Finances

Baxter Academy continues to prioritize fiscal responsibility. The modest deficit we anticipate this year is largely driven by rising costs tied to federal policy shifts, inflation, and a more cautious stance among some of our donors.

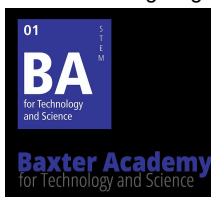
In planning for the year ahead, we chose not to increase our reliance on fundraising. We anticipate that philanthropic dollars will be in high demand, with many donors shifting their focus toward immediate and urgent needs created by cuts to federal programs. While we remain realistic about the challenges, we also see potential – particularly in building relationships with industry partners, trade organizations, and funders who are interested in the kind of future-facing work Baxter is doing.

We are also seeing some renewed interest in charter schools at the policy level, which may open additional opportunities. Still, we're approaching this moment with caution. Our spending remains conservative, and thanks to careful stewardship, our cash position is stronger than it has been in several years.

6. Our Goals

As we look ahead to the 2024-2025 school year, our priorities are grounded in what we're learning about our students, our program, and the evolving needs of the world they are preparing to enter.

- a. Strengthen Core Academic Foundations - We've seen a notable shift in the math readiness of our incoming students, particularly in foundational areas like Algebra. In response, we've restructured our math curriculum to meet students where they are and to rebuild essential skills. We expect this intentional focus to result in stronger performance in the next cycle of academic testing.*
- b. Deepen the Connection Between Rigor and Student Experience - We are continuing our work to bridge the gap between student perception and academic outcomes. This year, we will - expand the Baxter Scholars program to recognize students taking on sustained academic challenge; increase the complexity and expectations of Flex Friday projects directed by intelligence from external partners. We will expand formal proposals (in the form of an RFP) community partnerships, and cross-disciplinary presentations; bring in more outside experts to evaluate student work and provide authentic, real-world feedback; launch an Honors Lunch series to focus high level academic work for our most ambitious students; and continue to develop advanced coursework with a focus on preparing students for AP-level work through targeted teacher training and financial support for AP exam access.*
- c. Cultivate Leadership and Cross-Disciplinary Learning - We will continue to invest in opportunities for both students and staff to lead, collaborate, and share their expertise*



across disciplines – connecting humanities, STEM, and design in ways that reflect our belief in integrated, project-based learning.

- d. Enrich the Learning Environment, On and Off Campus - We remain committed to maintaining a vibrant and healthy school atmosphere. This includes - expanding student-created murals to bring color, voice, and pride into our shared spaces; and growing our use of off-site and expeditionary learning—through partnerships with industry, field-based environmental education, and deeper relationships with local leaders and organizations.*
- e. Design for Global Impact - Baxter will continue its work at the intersection of design and humanitarian need. Our ongoing collaboration with hospitals in western Kenya remains a central focus, and we are excited about a potential new partnership with an international energy company, which would expand our students' exposure to global energy and sustainability challenges.*

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Community Regional Charter School

Acting Board Chair: Dr. Theresa Overall

Executive Director: Travis Works



NARRATIVE

Community Regional Charter School, located in Skowhegan/Cornville, is in its fourteenth year of operation and serves 385 students from 43 cities and towns in the greater Skowhegan area.

23.64% of CRCS students have an IEP, slightly higher than the state average, and 70.39% of families are economically disadvantaged, significantly higher than the statewide average of 37.50%.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Family satisfaction
- Reading and Math Growth, including subgroups (*Dimensions Academy*)
- Graduation Rates
- College Readiness
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly

Areas of Focus:

- Reading and Math Proficiency, including subgroups (*Dimensions Academy + Overman Academy*)
- Reading and Math Growth, including subgroups (*Overman Academy*)
- Student Attendance
- Student school culture and climate

Student Achievement

CRCS administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in grades 3 thru 8 and grade 10. This state-required assessment is given two times per year – once in the fall and again in the spring. Overall, CRCS is not meeting expectations in either reading or math and should be an area of focus in the upcoming school year.

Growth results are measured using the NWEA MAP Assessment and the results are mixed. Students at Dimensions Academy are meeting framework expectations in both math and reading, an improvement over last year, but students at Overman Academy are not meeting expectations in either subject and should be an area of focus for the school in the upcoming school year.

CRCS uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and is meeting framework expectations with 76% of students meeting the college-readiness indicator in both math and reading. Overall, subgroups are also performing well on the Accuplacer, meeting framework expectations.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be a concern, but has improved from last year. The chronic absenteeism rate in Somerset County is approximately 32% – students at Overman Academy were chronically absent 38% of the school year in SY2024-25, but - while not meeting framework expectations - it has improved nearly 10 percentage points from last year. Students at Dimensions Academy were chronically absent 24% of the school year in SY2024-25, an improvement of nearly 10 percentage points and now approaching framework expectations.

Graduation rates remain strong, with 97% of seniors graduating this past June. Traditionally, 5 and 6-year graduation rates are also strong, but the school reports no students in either cohort this year.

71% of CRCS seniors successfully participated in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate survey annually to families, students, teachers, and staff. Results from the spring administration of the survey show that school culture and climate is strong among families, teachers, and staff. Student results are mixed with the older students responding favorably to the survey questions, and younger students responding unfavorably.

Organizational Sustainability

The CRCS board is an active, engaged board who meets regularly. The “timely posting” of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes is a concern and should be an area of focus for the board in the upcoming school year.

Annually, governing boards are required to complete a series of board training requirements as outlined by the Commission. The CRCS board completed 71% of its required training in SY2024-25, and, while not meeting framework expectations, is a considerable improvement from a year ago when the board completed only 26% of the required trainings.

Reporting timeliness and accuracy is a strength for the school with 91% of required reports submitted on time this school year.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, CRCS is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. During the year, the school has explored options to combine their three campuses by purchasing property on which to build a new facility. The school



engaged the services of RHR Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.

School Mission and Student Persistence

School did not report campus-specific outcomes, just district-level.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

District

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results • School Climate - 70th Percentile • Safety - 50th Percentile • School Fit - 60th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools
Panorama School Climate Survey - Staff Results • School Climate - 99th Percentile • Leadership - 90th Percentile • Professional Learning - 99th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 80th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Meeting
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	12 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	0 Agendas/8 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - 91% on time; 100% accurate	Exceeding
Board Training - 17 requirements; 12 completed (71%)	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting



Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>47 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	Moderate Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	Low Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

**Based on FY25 QTR4 financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
---------------------------------------	---------

School Customization

Percentage of students meeting projected growth on NWEA MAP reading within standard deviation - <i>School reports 62%</i>	Meeting
Percentage of students meeting projected growth on NWEA MAP math within standard deviation - <i>School reports 63%</i>	Meeting
Percentage of students meeting projected growth on NWEA MAP language within standard deviation - <i>School reports 66%</i>	Meeting

Creative Children's Academy

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results School Climate - <i>99th Percentile</i>	Exceeding
--	-----------



• Leadership - 99th Percentile • Professional Learning - 99th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
--	--

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student Persistence: School Year	<i>School did not provide</i>
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year	<i>School did not provide</i>

Dimensions Academy

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) • Grade 3 (Not Meeting) - 21% of CRCS 3rd grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 61% statewide per the Acacia platform • Grade 4 (Not Meeting) - 19% of CRCS 4th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 64% statewide per the Acacia platform • Grade 5 (Not Meeting) - 37% of CRCS 5th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 66% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) • Grade 3 (Not Meeting) - 29% of CRCS 3rd grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 63% statewide per the Acacia platform • Grade 4 (Not Meeting) - 6% of CRCS 4th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 55% statewide per the Acacia platform • Grade 5 (Not Meeting) - 22% of CRCS 5th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 53% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA)	Not Meeting



- Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting)	<-15% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting)	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Meeting - 52%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Meeting - 49%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Meeting - 53%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Approaching)	Approaching Between 35%-44.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Language Usage) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Female (Approaching) - Male (Meeting)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Approaching) - Male (Exceeding)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
Other	
Reading on Grade Level – 3 rd Grade	Reported as Required
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	24% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results (Grades 3-5) - School Climate - 20th Percentile - Safety - 70th Percentile	Not Meeting
--	--------------------



• Rigorous Expectations - <i>10th Percentile</i> • Teacher-Student Relationships - <i>20th Percentile</i>	Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results • School Climate - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Leadership - <i>90th Percentile</i> • Professional Learning - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Feedback and Coaching - <i>80th Percentile</i>	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results • School Climate - <i>80th Percentile</i> • Leadership - <i>60th Percentile</i> • Professional Learning - <i>70th Percentile</i> • Feedback and Coaching - <i>70th Percentile</i>	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student Persistence: School Year	<i>School did not provide</i>
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year	<i>School did not provide</i>

Overman Academy

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) • Grade 6 (Meeting) - 71% of CRCS 6th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 70% statewide per the Acacia platform • Grade 7 (Not Meeting) - 44% of CRCS 7th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 68% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and $<$ -5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”



- Grade 8 (Not Meeting) - 35% of CRCS 8th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 60% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Not Meeting) - 40% of CRCS high school students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) - Grade 6 (Not Meeting) - 25% of CRCS 6th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 45% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 7 (Not Meeting) - 4% of CRCS 7th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 39% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Not Meeting) - 6% of CRCS 8th grade students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 41% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Not Meeting) - 17% of CRCS high school students are "at or above state expectations" compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools "at or above state average"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Approaching Between $\geq$-15% and <-5% of state average of schools "at or above state average"
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting)	Approaching Between $\geq$-15% and <-5% of state average of schools "at or above state average"
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Not Meeting - 31%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Meeting - 48%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Not Meeting - 32%
NWEA MAP Assessment - Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%



- Female (Meeting) - Male (Not Meeting)	
NWEA MAP Assessment - Subgroups (Language Usage) - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Approaching)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment - Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Approaching)	Approaching Between 35%-44.9%
Graduation	
4-Year High School Completion - <i>School reports 97%</i>	Exceeding
5-Year High School Completion	<i>Not Applicable</i>
6-Year High School Completion	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - <i>76% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 239 or above in Reading; 76% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 226 or above in Math</i>	Meeting
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Approaching)	Meeting
Post-Secondary Activity - <i>71% of students participated</i>	Meeting
FAFSA Support - <i>CRCS provided support to 44% of families/students</i>	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	38% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results (Grades 6-12) - School Climate - <i>99th Percentile</i> - Safety - <i>99th Percentile</i>	Exceeding
---	------------------



• Rigorous Expectations - <i>90th Percentile</i> • Teacher-Student Relationships - <i>99th Percentile</i>	4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results • School Climate - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Leadership - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Professional Learning - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Feedback and Coaching - <i>99th Percentile</i>	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results • School Climate - <i>99th Percentile</i> • Leadership - <i>80th Percentile</i> • Professional Learning - <i>90th Percentile</i> • Feedback and Coaching - <i>70th Percentile</i>	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student Persistence: School Year	<i>School did not provide</i>
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year	<i>School did not provide</i>

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Are we an academic success?

- **How does the school's program serve the school's mission and vision?**
 - *"Community-Centered, Uncompromisingly Learner Focused": We are Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused. CRCS creates a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment where everyone is accepted and celebrated. The Community Regional Charter School provides a customized learning environment designed to allow every child to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically through the integration of STEAM projects and community connections aimed at unlocking a passion for life-long learning.*
 - *At CRCS we strive to provide an upgraded, customized learning environment where every learner can thrive socially, emotionally and academically. We have worked hard to put structures in place at all levels to allow staff to customize opportunities for learners. We*



encourage staff to be flexible in their classroom schedules, their instructional strategies and how learners demonstrate proficiency to allow learners to have voice and choice in their day.

- ***Are our students succeeding academically? What do test scores say about the school's academic success?***

- ***Math:***

- *At Dimensions Academy, we had 53% of our learners in grades 3rd-8th meet or surpass their NWEA growth goal in math this year. We are celebrating this as a huge success. This metric is Fall NWEA to Spring NWEA. Being an ungraded system that meets learners where they are, this growth metric is incredibly important to us.*
- *When it comes to academic proficiency, in grades 3rd-8th at Dimensions Academy, only 19% of the learners tested on the MTY in the spring. However, when we compare proficiency on spring NWEA and proficiency on spring MTY, **we go from 19% being proficient to 42% of the learners being proficient.** In May 2025, CRCS learners did both the MTY and NWEA and both tests were used to help gauge and guide instruction.*
 - *As an aside, of the 85 learners in grades 3-5, 20 of those learners are in their first year with CRCS. Only 15% of the new learners (3/20), came to CRCS at grade level. **The other 85% of the new learners came to us below the 33rd percentile.***
- *Overman in grades 6-11, 55% of our learners meet or surpass their growth goal; in math. If we look at the data within 1 standard deviation that percentage rises to 66%. We attribute this to the work we have been doing to calibrate using more intentional goal setting, and applying tools from P2C. Using the common language of instruction and sharing strategies has helped us make this gain. We are looking forward to expanding this and focusing on middle level learners and learners who are in the exceeds band of the math NWEA.*
- *At Overman, the group of 11th graders that were not proficient on the state test last year, 73% made their growth goals and 55% of them are now considered at grade level according to the MAP.*
- *For achievement, 41% of our learners from grades 6-11 at Overman are at grade level in math according to state and MAP assessments.*
- *Learners new to CRCS at Overman are still acclimating to our proficiency based, ungraded culture. They underperformed their peers that have been with CRCS longer.*



- *Our graduates provided many reasons to celebrate in the area of math. Accuplacer scores showed that 76% of our learners are prepared for college level courses and 16 learners took a college level math course at KVCC. Additionally, 78% of our graduating class is planning on continuing their education in a 4 year, 2 year or trade school.*
- *At Overman, there were two learners identified through IDEA that had dramatic increases in the 11th grade class. Those two learners moved from does not to above the mean through the course of this school year.*
- *Reading:*
 - *At Dimensions Academy, we had 52% of our learners in grades 3rd-8th meet or surpass their NWEA growth goal in reading this year. We are also celebrating this as a huge success. This metric is Fall NWEA to Spring NWEA.*
 - *When it comes to academic proficiency, in grades 3rd-8th at Dimensions Academy, 38% of the learners tested at grade level on the MTY in the spring.*
 - *Grade 4 is struggling across the board academically and behaviorally. Only 19 tested on grade level in reading. In math, only 6% were on grade level according to MTY but on NWEA, 38% were on grade level in math. Grade 4 has 16 learners. Eight of those learners (50% of the group) have an IEP. One learner has a robust 504 plan.*
 - *Grade 6 did exceptionally well with the reading assessments this spring. Our 6th graders with IEPs also did much better compared to the other IEP subgroups (40% of the 6th graders with IEPPs also tested on grade level for reading).*
 - *At Overman Academy, we had 56% of learners in grades 6-11 meet or surpass their growth goals in reading using the MAP assessment. If we look at this data within one standard deviation the percentage jumps to 70%. We are very excited about this success, but have plans to keep this upward progress going and to bring down the percentage of rapid guessing that we have in the older grades in reading.*
 - *At Overman, some areas of focus in reading are again the middle grades and learners that are performing in the exceeds category and to establish a better culture of reading with our oldest learners.*
 - *For Achievement, Overman Academy the NWEA MAP and State assessment showed us that 54% of our learners are at grade level in reading.*



- *At Overman, our Accuplacer scores for grade 12 showed us that 76% of our learners are prepared for a college level English class. Additionally, 9 of our graduates have taken either Tech Writing or College Composition.*
- *Language:*
 - *Last year at Dimensions Academy, 34% of the learners made their goal for language. This year, 51% of the learners made their growth goal in language!*
 - *As for testing on grade level, 36% of our learners in grades 3-8 appear to be on grade level for language. We believe this is accurate and one of our immediate goals for next year. We are currently doing curriculum work on the language skills and have made revisions to our scope and sequence to address this next year.*
 - *For Overman Academy, 37% of our learners are meeting the achievement benchmark in language usage and 67% are meeting growth goals. This is an improvement from last year, but it is something that we need to develop.*
- ***Are we meeting the needs of all of our students?***
 - *We are growing our Learning Coach program to best meet the individual needs of our Learning Community Learners. The Learning Coach will support academic, social/emotional, College and career readiness, postgraduate plans, and more.*
 - *We have previously mentioned the use of the Raven Record as a data management tool for tracking behavioral and academic interventions. This past year we began using LinkIt! as a data management tool, primarily using it for academic data. This summer we begin using the LinkIt! tool to replace our Raven Record to monitor behaviors and assign interventions for Tier I, II, and III behaviors. We will also be using LinkIt! for MTSS as it has a feature called "Request for Assistance". Facilitators are able to share a need they have for a learner and LinkIt! uses AI and a library database to suggest different strategies and approaches. LinkIt! will also help us track the interventions as we consider future referrals.*
 - *At Overman we tend to offer many seminars that are geared towards older learners and then differentiate to meet the various levels of learners. Moving forward we are going to be more intentional with providing unique opportunities tailored more to middle levels.*
- ***Are we implementing our academic program as we envisioned?***
 - *Yes, and we continue to reflect on ways to strengthen the ways our program represents our mission and vision.*
 - *We have continued to use the terms "proficiency" and "customized" when describing our academic program, but we have found that in some ways those terms have become overused, misunderstood, or watered down. We recently have started using the term*



*“ungraded” more as we explain our academic program. (An **ungraded school** is a school that does not formally organize students according to age-based grade levels. Students’ achievements are assessed by teachers, and each student is individually assigned to one of several fluid groups, according to what the student needs to learn next.)*

- *We are doing a lot more to integrate the three buildings and bring learners and staff together on more occasions to help in the community and engage in community projects. This was demonstrated in learning opportunities that connected the buildings including an early childhood seminar for upper Overman learners and cooking projects that brought older learners to Dimensions.*
- ***Is our school a safe and positive environment for staff, students, and families?***
 - *We continue to take bullying and harassment complaints seriously. We investigate and talk to all parties involved and show that we care and want to stop it. This past year, we saw a decrease in bullying situations at the elementary building, which we attribute to prompt investigations and communications to families and learners involved.*
 - *Through restorative practices, learners and staff learn to communicate openly to avoid misunderstandings. This helps prevent situations from escalating to bullying. Additionally, it helps staff work together and clearly articulate their needs with one another before grudges are established.*
 - *We have had an uptick in challenging behaviors at Overman with new learners. This has resulted in more opportunities for our returning learners to help newer learners engage in crucial conversations. We want to do more to help learners and families to understand the behavioral expectations early on during our Open House event and throughout the school year.*
- ***What have we learned from parent and student surveys?***
 - *For staff and teachers, we had tremendous gains from last year in favorable responses. We had a few staffing challenges last year that negatively impacted culture and climate, and it shows in last years’ Panorama scores. This year, we saw a positive increase in every area of the teacher and staff responses.*
 - *We have focused routinely and explicitly on strategic alignment with staff. We are truly in a place where we are building capacity with staff and have a team who is aligned with the mission and vision.*
 - *The leadership team has made extra efforts to customize experiences for staff as we do for learners. One example of this is by adjusting our professional development. This year, we have brought staff from all three buildings together two or three times a month to work on district-wide goals around strategic alignment and to improve the transitions between buildings for learners. This has*



provided us time to develop a common language of instruction and share the talents of staff among all three buildings.

- *For grades 3rd-5th learners, we had the lowest Panorama scores across the subgroups (parents, teachers, staff, grades 6-12).*
- *We are still struggling with “how does behavior of others help or hurt your learning”. We only had 31% of learners respond favorably to this question. Next year, we are going to explicitly teach ways that your behavior can help others. We plan to tie it into how we teach the Habits of Mind.*
- *We saw an increase with the 3rd-5th graders and their perceptions of whether the rules at school are fair or unfair. We have done a lot of work with guided play at recess, and explicitly rules and direct teaching of games, which I feel has made a positive impact on learners. Because of this, we’ve also had a decrease in physical incidents on the playground.*
- *One of our lowest scores with the grades 3-5 group is experiencing disrespect. This is not a surprise, as this year our office referrals were more commonly around disrespectful and mean behavior. We also are creating action steps for this as well.*
- *In regards to the parent survey, we were thrilled to get 162 family responses on the survey this year, up from 137 last year. Our results were just about the same as last year. School climate continues to be a strength, whereas safety and perceived safety is an area we are still working on.*
- ***Are we an organizational success?***
 - *Areas of Focus*
 - *Calendar and Schedule*
 - *Our school calendar has remained consistent for several years, however, this year we have made a few changes that we feel are in response to needs of our staff.*
 - *In FY26, the first Friday of school will be a full workshop day with the goal of giving staff time to debrief and calibrate protocols, procedures, and initiatives. In the past we have relied on the normal half day schedule, however, a small group of staff voiced the need for a day without learners to focus on this recalibration. The administration also saw this as an opportunity for staff to have in depth and important conversations, without being exhausted or distracted. In addition, there will be some time to calibrate with our Strategic Design.*



- *We are in person five days a week with no remote option. We continue with half days for learners on Fridays, while staff participate in professional development in the afternoons.*
- *We are continuing with summer offerings district wide for the month of July 2025. These summer school offerings are curricular and co-curricular, from math intensives to gardening, to technology and writing camps. These offerings are taught by CRCS staff and open to currently enrolled CRCS learners for four weeks.*
- *Student Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention*
 - *Building Administrators continue to be hands-on with the enrollment process as families join the CRCS system. This involves the process of touring the building, explaining the mission and vision, and setting up shadow days. This year, we were enrolling learners each month, and in June we had multiple learners spend at least a week with us to get a feel for CRCS prior to their official start date in the fall.*
 - *We continue to use Facebook as a primary tool for marketing. However, we also attended the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce Business to Business Showcase in May of this year to promote the school. We recently purchased some easy to use promotional materials that we can take to events to promote the school.*
 - *At Dimensions, our un-enrollments this year were widely due to transportation issues (our September bus times were unstable and caused five un-enrollments in the Oakland area), or due to behaviors. We had new learners join us from the Farmington area who were in a general education behavior program at their old school. Parents had hoped the children's behaviors would change at CRCS, but in large part, the behaviors continued and eventually led to un-enrollment.*
- *Management and Operations*
 - *At the close of the 2024-2025 school year, we find ourselves hiring for the following positions:*
 - *Creative Children's Academy*
 - *2 Ed Tech II/III Positions*
 - *Dimensions Academy*
 - *1 Special Ed Ed Tech III Position*
 - *1 Facilitator Position*
 - *1 Custodian*



- *Overman Academy*
 - *1 Facilitator Position*
- *Parent and Community Involvement*
 - *We have restarted our “Friends and Families of CRCS” group. This is similar to a PTO group. We started it back up in the late winter and were able to do two events with the help and leadership of CRCS families.*
 - *CRCS Dimensions opened the doors every Friday as a “standing invitation” for families to come into school with us. We had a few families each week come in. Some of the parents who came in multiple times became “family” for other learners in the classrooms as well and it made a positive difference on the culture.*
 - *We switched communication methods this year and went from Seesaw to Reach My Teach. We have found even greater communication with parents using Reach My Teach, as it is set up like text messaging and there is no need to download any specific app.*
 - *In June, we did two school wide beach trips and had significant family turnout. Our families enjoy any opportunity to join the school with events.*
 - *For community involvement, CRCS Dimensions Academy was chosen as the Somerset County representative for Winter Kids! We were one of sixteen schools in the state selected for the competitive track. Community involvement is a key part of Winter Kids. We ended up working with Somerset Public Health and Somerset Woods Trustees the most, but also had about six other outside guests come into our school and work with our learners. In the end, we finished in 3rd place (bronze) and won \$1,500. We hope to be chosen for the competitive track again next year.*
- ***Are we a governance success?***
 - *Areas of Focus*
 - *The Board did not meet the expectations for Board Trainings due to one of the Board Members not completing their training on time. Holding individuals accountable was difficult when we did not have access to their progress in a timely manner. Moving forward the platform will be different and ideally the tracking of requirements will be more transparent. To address this area on the Performance Framework, the Board Chair will be conducting monthly check-ins to ensure that board members are on pace to complete any required trainings. In addition, Central Office will also be monitoring and sending reminders to Board Members of their obligations.*



- *Governing Board Composition - Continue growing the board to a minimum of 9.*
 - *The school board has spent a great deal of time and energy on growing protocols, procedures, and a deeper level of oversight of the school in general. The board has been continually working on capacity to effectively lead and manage the school. The board chair has focused on the effectiveness and strength of committees. This year the committees have had chairs that have led the committees effectively, and frequently challenged and sought deeper understanding from the hired staff. The committee chairs are regularly asking deep and thorough questions about academic excellence, finances, and operation policies and procedures.*
 - *We had a new board member join mid year but was unable to continue due to responsibilities with his work schedule and future in education. We are in the process of filling that seat while still reaching our goal of getting to 9 members. Right now committees are well functioning and expertise in finance and academics is strong. The area of need is public school policy and we also want to add to our financial team.*
 - *Governing Body - Our goal the past three years has been on increasing the participation of standing committees including facilities, finance, and academic excellence has been achieved. Each meeting has engaged board members, including the chair. This past year the Chair of the Board attended almost every committee meeting but did not need to lead the committee because the Committee Chair had the competence and a skill set to execute their duties effectively. The Committees asked the administration very difficult and challenging questions on school data, school performance, financial data, etc. Each time was done so with appropriate boundaries and roles. This year, the committees really demonstrated a high degree of independence and success.*
 - *Having strong committees and effective running board makes it easier to reach out to new potential board members.*
- *All board agendas and minutes are published publicly, however, the Board Chair would like to continue to increase communication between the board and our school community. We have hired a consultant to redevelop our website and to create a site that looks at the school through the lens of the prospective and current parent. Part of that process is to increase and track analytics for how many people visit our pages and ideally board information.*



- *The Board did a deep analysis of the self assessment in Board on Track and spent the year creating a comprehensive Board Handbook. This handbook now can be used to onboard new board members and serve as a resource for all Board Members. This was a major undertaking for the CRCS Board and during the upcoming year it will help Board Members feel more confident in their roles, and responsibilities.*
- *The Board Chair has made a goal of hosting a CRCS Board Retreat in FY26. This retreat will include reviewing and revising goals for the Board, having Legal Counsel provide a training on Open Meeting Laws, discuss recruitment strategies for Board Members, etc.*
- ***Are we a financial success?***
 - *Areas of Focus*
 - *Budget and Financial Management*
 - *CRCS has operated with a balanced budget for 13 years and every audit has minor recommendations. In regards to our most recent audit, we had no findings or recommendations.*
 - *CRCS has been seeking another auditor with no success. The Business Office sent an inquiry to several auditors on the MDOE website and received some interest.*
 - *Facilities/Finance*
 - *CRCS is at the point where it is a necessity to expand space for the K-7 level to accommodate the 40+ learners per age level entering PreK. Kindergarten classes with 25 learners had a negative impact on our academic scores. In FY26 we added an additional position that reduces class size for the youngest learners.*
 - *CRCS has engaged two National Partners (HighMark and Raymond James). This process involves our legal counsel, who specializes in commercial real estate.*
 - *The Facilities Committee has thoroughly examined different scenarios, including maintaining three buildings, consolidating to two buildings, and consolidating to a single building. Our budget is broken down by specific building and our two largest buildings are equal in “cost” when you look at the loan payment for Overman Academy and then at the facility needs of Dimensions. Dimensions needs a \$500,000 roof replacement and a septic leach field replacement of \$300,000+. In addition to accommodate*



the lack of space at Dimensions, an addition needs to be built but the size of the property makes it an engineering challenge.

- *The Facilities and Finance committee has done a thorough analysis of the necessary capital improvements to maintain the three buildings and the committee decision to look at consolidation. The essential question is does the school want to take a combined \$6,000,000+ debt at a high interest rate.*
- *The CRCS Board is having Raymond James do a financial feasibility study to determine what CRCS can reasonably afford given current enrollment and future enrollment. This number is adjusted each month to reflect reality and current budget models.*
- *The administration and Board have looked at our geographic location for the catchment area and learner recruitment of staff. Being as far north as we are in Central Maine for staff recruitment is a challenge. We have been surveying families and it appears that moving to Waterville, our families have no concerns with moving thus far. It is important to the board that we do not disenfranchise our current enrolled learners.*
- *The CRCS administration and Board have data to support that if we were consolidated in a single building, we would keep enrollment open up for grades PreK-12 and close enrollment 9-12 so that we are not competing with other Charter Schools in the area, but also it's about philosophy. We are a Proficiency Based model where other charter schools are more standards referenced or based. CRCS may be the ONLY public school in the State of Maine that is truly competency/proficiency.*
- *The Commission has raised the question about the relocation and impact on other charter schools, specifically MeANS and MeAA. We looked at our data and since 2020 our data shows:*
 - *9 learners have unenrolled with CRCS and moved to other brick and mortar charter schools in the region. Five enrolled at MeANS and four enrolled at MeAA for a total of 9 leaving.*
 - *3 learners have unenrolled with MeANS and enrolled at CRCS and 2 learners have unenrolled at MeAA and enrolled at CRCS. One learners has unenrolled at CRCS, enrolled at MeAA, and then re-enrolled at CRCS. We've had 4 learners enroll from other brick and mortar charter schools, compared to 9 learners that CRCS has helped enroll in other charter schools.*



- *This data doesn't include the learners that unenrolled from CRCS to homeschool and ultimately enrolled at MeANS.*

■ Transportation

- *CRCS has no major changes in transportation. There are some changes with eliminating stops and adding stops to reflect the needs of parents and learners, however the routes will be almost identical to FY25.*

■ Food Services

- *CRCS has no major changes in the food service program.*

■ Insurance

- *CRCS is adjusting its Health Insurance Plan to help with the rising costs of insurance. For example,*
 - *Health insurance new terms*
 - *70% of up to \$3,000 (First \$4,285) decreased from 90%.*
 - *Salary staff w/children.*
 - *Increase contribution for first child from \$3,000 to annually to \$3,600*
 - *Increase contribution for each additional child from \$600 annually to \$1,200*
 - *Hourly staff w/children:*
 - *Increase contribution for first child from \$3,000 and annually to \$3,300*
 - *Increase contribution for each additional child from \$600 annually to \$900.*
- *CRCS budgeted for an increase of over 12% for FY26 in May, however, the actual number is less than 6% due to our performance and claims.*

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Ecology Learning Center

Board President: Josh Kercsmar

Head of School: Leza Packard

the Ecology Learning Center

NARRATIVE

Ecology Learning Center, located in Unity, is in its sixth year of operation and serves 120 students from 33 cities and towns in the surrounding area.

26.67% of ELC students have an IEP and 35.83% are economically disadvantaged - both higher than statewide averages.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading Proficiency
- College Readiness
- Graduation
- Student Attendance
- School culture and climate
- Passion Projects
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly

Areas of Focus:

- Math Proficiency

Student Achievement

ELC administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 10. ELC is meeting framework expectations in reading, and approaching expectations in math - both slightly lower than a year ago. Reportable subgroups are also performing slightly lower than last year and should be a focus for the school in the upcoming school year.

The school uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and is meeting framework expectations for both reading and math benchmarks. It is important to note that all subgroups, with the exception of students with IEPs, are exceeding framework expectations.

Chronic absenteeism is a highlight for the school this year, with only 14.95% of students considered chronically absent, a huge improvement from 25.93% a year ago. Most of ELC's students reside in Waldo County where the chronic absenteeism rate is approximately 31%.

the Ecology Learning Center

ELC reports that 100% of its 4 and 5-year students graduated this year, exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education.

100% of ELC seniors successfully participate in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. ELC's results across all stakeholder groups remain strong, with all exceeding framework expectations this year. We note the dedicated effort made by ELC to ensure that required participation thresholds were met this year.

Organizational Sustainability

The ELC governing board is an active board, holding regular meetings throughout the school year. In addition to holding an annual retreat, board members met all of the required board training requirements - exceeding expectations on the performance framework.

We encourage the board to continue to focus on the “timely posting” of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes as this is an area of the framework that is approaching expectations. Another area of focus should be on consistent timeliness of required reports that are submitted to the Commission.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, ELC falls in the low to moderate risk on all financial metrics with the exception of the two-year cash flow, which the board continues to closely review. During the year, the school found the cost of running the newly acquired Clifford Arts & Student Center was higher than anticipated while expected revenues were lower. The board has identified the creation of a strategic business plan for the facility as a key priority along with additional fundraising activities. ELC engaged the services of PGM Accounting and received a clean financial audit for FY24.

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence remains a strength for the school with 88% of students persisting throughout the school year and 97% submitting an intent to re-enroll for the upcoming school year.

the **Ecology**
Learning
Center

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) Grade 10 - 58% of ELC high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Meeting Between $\geq$ -5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 10 - 42% of ELC high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) Female (Approaching)	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) Female (Approaching)	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above expectations”
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 100%	Exceeding
5-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 100%	Exceeding
6-Year High School Graduation Rate	Not Applicable
Post-Secondary Readiness	

the Ecology Learning Center

<u>Accuplacer</u> - 78% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 239 or above in Reading; 75% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 226 or above in Math	Meeting
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPS (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding)	Meeting 75%-85% of students are meeting or exceeding the goal in both math and reading
Post-Secondary Activity Participation - School reports 100%	Exceeding
FAFSA Support - ELC provided support to 85% of families/students	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	14.95% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - School Fit - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 90th Percentile - Teacher-Student Relationships - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Leadership - 90th Percentile - Professional Learning - 80th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 60th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results School Climate - 99th Percentile	Exceeding

the Ecology Learning Center

- Leadership - 99th Percentile - Professional Learning - 90th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 70th Percentile	4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>ELC developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	Meeting - 14 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agendas/0 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>79% on time; 98% accurate</i>	Approaching
Board Training - <i>13 requirements/13 completed (100%) + Annual Retreat</i>	Exceeding
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Moderate Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>30 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	Moderate Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	High Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

**Based on FY25 QTR4 financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - <i>106 of 120 Students (88%)</i>	Meeting
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - <i>77 of 79 Students (97%)</i>	Exceeding

the Ecology Learning Center

School Customization

Passion Projects - The intended outcome of week-long winter Passion Projects is to guide students to explore and develop an independent interest that will prepare them for future education and employment opportunities. Students will gain skills in project planning, completion, and presentation. They will strengthen skills in organization, public speaking, and self-reflection. The goal meets the school's mission by immersing students in an "authentic real-world learning" project of their choice, seeking "mentorship" and identifying a need or challenge in their community. We will measure our goal using a rubric and narrative reflection. The rubric will provide quantitative data by measuring four categories (planning, process, product, presentation). The narrative reflection will provide qualitative data by asking students to write about the quality of their work, how they would re-do or revise their project, and what they learned about themselves throughout the Passion Project.	Exceeding With a goal of 95%, at least 65% of students will learn an overall score of 80%-100% on their week-long winter Passion Project.
---	--

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Academic Success

*The **mission** of the Ecology Learning Center is to deeply root students in Maine's ecological & cultural landscapes, foster authentic real-world learning through mentorship & craft, and cultivate compassionate and resilient leaders prepared to engage in the challenges of today & tomorrow.*

*The **vision** for the Center is to inspire high school students from Waldo County and beyond to roll up their sleeves and engage in their local communities through service learning and apprenticeships. Guided by the unifying theme of "ecology" (the study of the relations between organisms and their environment), students will enact and embody ecological principles by making meaningful connections between school and community. The Center will help students develop the knowledge, skills, and commitment to work collaboratively to address important local challenges. Students will take active roles in every aspect of their education, with the support and guidance of teachers and local experts.*

the Ecology Learning Center

Academic Program

On June 5, the Ecology Learning Center graduated its third and largest class of 28 students. Every graduation ceremony has uniquely reflected the school's mission, vision, and overall success. Held outside at MOFGA under a tent loaned by a local fire department and set up by parent and student volunteers, the ceremony began with live fiddle and guitar music performed by the younger sibling and parent of a student in the Bridge program. The "keynote" speeches delivered by all 28 seniors captivated the audience of over 300 family, friends, board and community members. A common theme in the speeches was gratitude for teachers, with messages that made the audience cry, laugh, and reflect deeply.

Following traditional awards for academic achievement and scholarships, the faculty presented "Mission" awards to students acknowledged for being an Environmental Leader, Community Leader, Hands-On Leader, Compassionate Leader, and Resilient Leader. It was so difficult for the staff to limit mission awards to just five students, they added two additional awards: Mentorship Leader and Creative Arts Leader. The graduation reflected every element of our school vision, from folk music and fresh food to student leadership and intergenerational community engagement.

This year the school grew from 107 students to 120. Of the 120 students enrolled during the 2025 academic year, 28 had IEPs and 18 had 504 plans. In order to accommodate the needs of these students, we had 3 full time Ed Techs and a part time special ed teacher. Feedback from parents of students with IEPs was once again very positive.

The addition of the Clifford Arts & Student Center greatly expanded the school's arts curriculum and sense of community. Courses in theater, filmmaking, and ceramics were introduced. A senior and alum collaborated to create an entirely student-led musical theater performance with sold-out performances. The Cliff's kitchen was certified in the fall to allow the nutrition staff and students chefs to prepare and serve lunch on site for the first time since the school opened. The visual, performing, and culinary arts at the new Arts & Student Center brought students, staff, and community closer together.

Assessment

Our test scores indicate that we are meeting our goal of 75% or above graduating students meeting benchmarks in one of the three established tests for math and reading: Accuplacer, SATs, or ASVABs. Students in subgroup categories (economically disadvantaged, 504 plans, and IEP) are demonstrating college readiness in reading.

the Ecology Learning Center

In the grade report data, 79% of ninth graders are low average and above in math and 91% of ninth graders are low average above in reading. In the MAP growth grade report, 78% of 10th graders were at or above low average in math and 100% of 10th graders were at or above low average in reading. In the Maine Through Year assessment, 42% of 10th graders were at or above state expectations in math and 58% of 10th graders were at or above state expectations in reading. In the grade report data, 88% of 11th graders were at or above low average in math and 96% of 11th graders were at or above low average in reading.

Compared to local catchment area testing data, the Ecology Learning Center had a higher test completion rate; 100% of our students were tested as a whole and in subgroup categories, while only 80% and 90% of students at two local districts were tested. When comparing AY24 test results with these two geographically closest districts, the Ecology Learning Center scored higher in both English Language Arts and Math. In ELA, 79.2% of our students scored at or above expectations as compared with 67% and 42.9% at the other schools. In Math, 44% of our students scored at or above expectations as compared with 37% and 31% at the other schools.

When comparing AY24 subgroup data, the Ecology Learning Center again scored higher than our two neighboring districts. In Math, 50% of our economically disadvantaged students scored at or above state expectations as compared with 26% and 34% of economically disadvantaged students from the other districts. In the sub category of special education only one comparison school had data to use. In ELA, 33% of our SpEd students scored at or above state expectations as compared with 22% of SpEd students from the neighboring district. In Math, 33% of our SpEd students scored at or above state expectations as compared with 18% of SpEd students from the neighboring district.

Climate and Discipline

As we grow, the Ecology Learning Center has been able to uphold the vision of our academic programming through block scheduling, the Work and Wellness Wednesday curriculum, internship program, Passion Projects, small class sizes, highly qualified and passionate educators, and deep connections with our community to foster place-based learning opportunities. Using state assessment data to understand deficits, we prioritize student growth and a community-wide growth mindset with shared leadership.

We consistently offer professional development in Restorative Justice practices. This year, we welcomed two extremely well-respected instructors instrumental in founding the Restorative Justice movement in Waldo County: Sarah Mattox in October to train our staff, and Margaret Micolichuk in June to train our Board of Directors. As the staff continues to strengthen and expand their Restorative practices, the

the Ecology Learning Center

school celebrates few complaints, low violence, and an emphasis on students understanding how to identify and repair harm.

Results from the Panorama parent and student surveys affirm our positive school climate. Participation in the survey increased, from 44% to 58% participation by families and from 67% to 90% participation by students. Survey results were higher in almost every category this year. 87% of families and 71% of students have positive perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school, up 11% for students from last year. 92% of families and 79% of students have positive perceptions of physical and psychological safety at school, up 3% and 8% from last year, respectively.

Organizational Success

Calendar & Schedule

To support our partnership with RSU 3, we follow their school calendar. We published our AY2025-2026 calendar on our website after RSU 3 approved their calendar. Next year we will once again provide Remote Learning days on RSU 3's Early Release days. This eases transportation and more importantly, it gives our students and staff important practice for remote learning if we are forced to go remote without warning. We will begin school one day earlier than RSU 3 to accommodate our fall orientation trips.

We continued a weekly schedule that allowed for longer blocks, project-based learning, interdisciplinary work between departments, and more ease for students to advance to higher math levels. We reworked our Wednesday schedule once again to streamline and strengthen Career Readiness and Wellness courses, required for graduation.

Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention

Our enrollment goal for the year was 125 students (grades 9-12). Our student count on October 1, 2024 was 120 so we had to revise the budget. Enrollment on the last day of school was 108. We welcomed a record-high 9th grade class, and moreover a group of students who are the most closely aligned with the mission of any class thus far. The approved budget for FY26 is again 125 students. As of mid-June, 2025, we have 129 students enrolled for AY26. Our recruitment has been primarily word of mouth, flyers posted at public places, and social media.

Staffing and Human Resources

We have a consistently high staff return rate, with 23 out of 28 staff members returning. We are excited to welcome three new full time employees: a special education teacher, math teacher, and "magician" (split role as art teacher, ed tech, receptionist, and Clifford Arts & Student Center co-director). We are

the Ecology Learning Center

also adding new part time teachers in math, music, and theater. Our operations departments (transportation & nutrition) have stabilized, with a strong Operations Director hired last August. Our part-time registrar will continue as the registrar in AY26 with expanded hours to support office management and substitute teaching.

Governance Success

The board of directors is engaged and capable of ensuring that ELC meets its mission. We have a well-balanced board in terms of experience on this board, perspective, and expertise. The new members bring significant academic experience (decades teaching in colleges/universities). Board members are kind, caring, and hard working. They are willing to learn and grow as new challenges arise.

Current challenges the board faces are how to meet the school's financial needs, especially with ongoing facility costs of the Clifford Arts & Student Center. Several monthly board meetings focused on fundraising and the board chair leads a grant writing committee. Additionally, the board collaborated with the faculty for a half-day professional development session in March to address Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The board attended a full day annual retreat on June 30 where they dedicated significant discussion time to fundraising.

The Directors are confident they have the capacity to lead and manage the school. Their practices are very open and transparent to the community. They continue to grow and learn, as evidenced by conducting a self assessment and discussing the results at the annual retreat, and by representing at the December and May professional development workshops offered by the Charter Commission. The Directors are currently seeking additional board members, as the numbers decreased in June from 8 to 6.

Financial Success

Following the May 2025 Treasury Report, financial metrics were acceptable. Revenue was below by \$154K and expenses below budget by \$101K, which resulted in financials falling \$53K net under budget. The school borrowed \$50K in an interest-free loan from the homeschool enrichment Bridge program in February and paid it back in full on June 30, 2025.

FY25 is the first year of five that a net loss is anticipated. From a profitability standpoint, the school's total equity is 1.4 million, mostly from acquisitions of the Clifford Arts & Student Center gift and profits from the past 4 years. Unrestricted net assets will go down but we will still have positive net assets.

the Ecology Learning Center

From a cash flow standpoint, revenues will better match expenses in FY26 due to the balanced timing of per pupil allocations throughout the whole year.

Facilities - Costs increased dramatically, due to unexpected repairs, maintenance and utility bills at the new Clifford Arts & Student Center. The Cliff Manager position (0.5 FTE) has been divided into a shared position between the returning manager and a new employee with complimentary skills and has applied for and received "StreetScape" funding from the town of Unity to address repairs needed to the porch and entranceway to the building.

Transportation - We stabilized costs with strong leadership from our new Director of Operations. Van routes were streamlined to save gas and driver time, and vehicles were carefully maintained to avoid purchasing an additional van. The two older 14-passenger buses were finally sold for \$6K each.

Fundraising plays a critical role in the school's fiscal operation. As we enter FY26, our primary goals are to meet our enrollment target of 125 and increase fundraising. We had another clean financial audit, this year with PGM Accounting and have scheduled the FY25 audit even earlier this year in July.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences

Board President: Bill Doughty

Executive Director: Jacinda Cotton-Castro



NARRATIVE

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences, located in Gray, is in its thirteenth year of operation and serves 177 students from 28 cities and towns in the surrounding area.

28.81%% of FSAS students have an IEP, higher than the state average, while 28.25% of families are economically disadvantaged – lower than the state average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading Growth and Proficiency
- Math Growth
- Subgroup performance
- Family satisfaction

Areas of Focus:

- Math Proficiency
- Student attendance
- School Culture and Climate (Students, Teachers, and Staff)

Student Achievement

FSAS administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess student proficiency in Grades 3-8 and is meeting expectations in Reading, while approaching expectations in Math - similar to results last year. Subgroup performance on the Maine Through Year Assessment is strong, with students in some grade levels outperforming their peers by over 40 percentage points.

After having received two waivers for the administration of the NWEA MAP Growth Assessments, FSAS was required to begin using it again in the Fall of 2024. The school exceeded its expectations in Reading after having not met expectations last year and has improved outcomes in math growth from approaching to meeting expectations.

Subgroup performance on the NWEA MAP assessment is strong with subgroups exceeding expectations in Reading and Language Usage, and meeting expectations in Math.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be a concern. In Cumberland County, chronic absenteeism hovers around 19%, while FSAS reports that 47.62% of its student population were considered chronically absent this past year.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate survey annually. For the third year in a row, FSAS students, teachers, and staff responded unfavorably to the survey questions. Family results; however, remain strong. We encourage the FSAS governing board and administration to prioritize school climate and culture in the upcoming school year.

Organizational Sustainability

The FSAS governing board meets regularly, but the “timely posting” of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes remains a concern and should be an area of focus in the upcoming school year.

The board completed only 26% of its annual board training requirements and for the third year in a row is not meeting framework expectations.

FSAS submitted 70% of its required documents on time in SY2024-25, a decrease from 81% the year before.

Financial Management and Viability

Financial statements used to calculate 3rd Quarter outcomes were due on 5/15/25 and received on 8/20/25. Financial statements used to calculate 4th Quarter outcomes were due on 8/15/25 and received on 9/16/25.

During FY25, FSAS contracted with a financial services firm to perform a review of its financial positions and manage its accounting functions. The school expects to meet deadlines and produce accurate reports during FY26.

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, 50% of the financial metrics on the Performance Framework were high risk. Lower enrollment for the SY24-25 resulted in a lower state subsidy for FY25 and an out of district placement drew down cash reserves. Enrollment has improved and the school has added a preschool class with 24 students which will boost the available subsidy in FY26. The school engaged the services of Runyon, Kersteen and Ouellette, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean financial audit for FY24, although the report indicated the school was not in compliance with their USDA loan reserve requirements as monthly payments into a cash reserve account were not made for six months during FY24. In addition, the report noted the school did not complete expenditure testing requirements on their Federal audit. FSAS created an updated system of compliance to rectify these deficiencies.



School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence remains a strength for the school with 96% of students persisting throughout the school year and 95% of students submitting an intent to re-enroll for the upcoming school year.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) - Grade 3 (Approaching) - 47% of FSAS students in grade 3 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 61% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 4 (Meeting) - 67% of FSAS students in grade 4 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 64% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 5 (Not Meeting) - 44% of FSAS students in grade 5 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 66% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 6 (Approaching) - 58% of FSAS students in grade 6 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 70% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 7 (Exceeding) - 78% of FSAS students in grade 7 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 68% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Exceeding) - 85% of FSAS students in grade 8 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 60% statewide per the Acacia platform	Meeting Between $\geq$-5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 3 (Not Meeting) - 34% of FSAS students in grade 3 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 63% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching Between $\geq$-15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”



- Grade 4 (Meeting) - 53% of FSAS students in grade 4 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 55% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 5 (Not Meeting) - 31% of FSAS students in grade 5 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 53% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 6 (Approaching) - 33% of FSAS students in grade 6 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 45% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 7 (Meeting) - 40% of FSAS students in grade 7 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 39% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Exceeding) - 50% of FSAS students in grade 8 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 41% statewide per the Acacia platform	
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Meeting) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting)	Meeting Between $\geq$ -5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Approaching) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting)	Meeting Between $\geq$ -5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Exceeding - 59%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Exceeding - 56%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Meeting - 45%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Exceeding) - Male (Meeting)	Exceeding Exceeds 55%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Language Usage) Students with IEPs (Meeting)	Exceeding



- Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding)	Exceeds 55%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Meeting)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
Other	
Reading on Grade Level – 3 rd Grade	Reported as Required
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	47.62% - NEO Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - School Fit - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results (Grades 3-5) - School Climate - 10th Percentile - Safety - 40th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 10th Percentile - Teacher/Student Relationships - 10th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results (Grades 6-8) - School Climate - 40th Percentile - Safety - 40th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 40th Percentile - Teacher/Student Relationships - 40th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results - School Climate - 60th Percentile - Leadership - 40th Percentile - Professional Learning - 40th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 10th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher



	when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results - School Climate - 50th Percentile - Leadership - 40th Percentile - Professional Learning - 60th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 30th Percentile	Approaching 2 of the 4 of the required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	11 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agendas/6 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>70% on time; 95% accurate</i>	Approaching
Board Training - <i>23 requirements; 6 completed (26%)</i>	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>37 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	High Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	High Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	High Risk
Financial Obligations	High Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

*Based on FY25 QTR4 financials

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
---------------------------------------	----------------



Student Persistence: School Year - 171 of 177 students (96%)	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - 151 of 158 students (95%)	Exceeding

School Customization

Clear classroom standards and education program.	Exceeding - 100%
Assessments used to document learning.	Exceeding - 100%

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Highlights - Academic Year 2024/2025

What we have learned and how we grew this past year:

- Continued to LIFT Fiddlehead up and review programs as they existed prior to the pandemic, and what is needed now.
- Developed a NEW SPED TA program - push into classrooms.
- Awarded ONE Federal Grant: 2nd Climate Education PD Grant!
- Curriculum Framework fully developed and training in place.
- FOURTH 8th Grade Graduation held. 8th grade students also worked on Fiddlehead School's CAPSTONE project and presentations.
- HELD 95% of staff for next year!
- Developed a mentor program for staff.

It was overall a fantastic year. I certainly believe we still have held true to our Mission and in the end STRONGER than ever. Thankfully, we retained 95% of our Lead Classroom Teachers, and added new positions in our Positive Behavior Interventionist, as well as finding a 3rd Special Education Case Manager for next year!

Our student enrollment is at capacity for next year (218 students) as our school CONTINUES to offer grades Pre-K through 8th Grade, and adding an additional Pre-K classroom.

Our COTL (Coordinator of Teaching & Learning) continues with Anne Stires for the lower grades. Anne brought to our school this year the experience and a deep understanding of our approach and goals for our school. She worked closely with the staff in Grades Pre-K through 4th Grade. The Climate Ed Grant will help us with climate integration within our curriculum and adding in Seal Rossignol, as our point person for the upper grades.



And our Principal, Jason Manjourides, has gained traction from his deep experience as Principal and will continue in this position for next year.

The learning for our school continues to focus on reflecting on our curriculum model and really develop continuity and consistency from grade to grade.

Our Board is truly a working BOARD of Directors and is working hard to continue to develop its membership. We have one Board member that is terming out, and 3 more new members to join us this August. The Board fully “gets” the mission and is beginning its new onboarding process starting this summer. We added a YURT in the backyard for onsite nature based programming, art & Spanish.

We have re-built our culture and the trust within our four walls and around us after a nearly devastating pandemic.

We know there is more work to be done, but we also feel loved and supported by our families – both the children and the parents. Both the Board of Directors and the staff are ready to move forward on the re-visioning that is needed to continue to grow and flourish.

What is student success? Our School-Wide Goals for 2024-2025

We have just completed our Comprehensive Needs Assessment – and continue to work on developing our Math scores and growth, particularly in the upper grades. The math teacher we hired for grades 6th-8th has shown us that with this instruction, our overall math scores have climbed once again. We are also committed to work on staff issues such as evaluation, recruitment, and retention. This year we were able to retain 95% of employees! We would also like to focus on sub recruitment, a mentoring program, and a resource room/learning lab.

Are we an Academic Success?

Population Served - Fiddlehead serves Pre-K through 8th Grade. We held our fourth 8th Grade Graduation at our offsite location in New Gloucester, at Norumbega YURTS! continue to be taught in all of our classrooms as it has proven very valuable in weaving a connection between all of the students in our building.

Educational Philosophy - Based on the recommendation of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors, our Coordinator of Teaching & Learning, in concert with our staff, the Education Committee & the Board of Directors have finished our MODEL framework grade by grade that we will use for probably future expansion. This year we strengthened our focus seasonally documenting our model based on Emergent Curriculum Approach for grades Pre-K through 2nd; Inquiry Based Approach for



grades 3rd through 5th; and Project Based Approach for Grades 6th-8th – with an 8th Grade Capstone. The Capstone was one again a BIG success this past spring.

Fiddlehead School Philosophy Statement

What We Strive For

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is committed to the growth and development of the whole child – socially, emotionally, physically, academically, intellectually, and artistically. The goal of a Fiddlehead education is for students to build a toolbox of habits, skills, and wonderings to drive a lifelong love of learning. We aim to empower learners to seek answers to their own questions and to develop the means necessary for this endeavor.

What We Believe

At Fiddlehead, seven core educational beliefs drive our practices throughout the grades:

- 1. We believe children are capable, competent, and innately curious. They are the co-constructors of their own learning. Our school maintains a deep respect for children and childhood.*
- 2. We believe the foundation of learning lies in habits of mind such as asking questions, looking closely, making reasonable predictions, and engaging in dialogue. Students are encouraged to express their thought processes orally and in writing. In addition, students are taught executive functioning skills such as planning, organization, and self-control.*
- 3. We believe in teachers as facilitators of learning, closely observing children, assessing understanding through a variety of approaches, and using this knowledge to help students extend their thinking. We offer students numerous materials and methods with which to express themselves and their understandings, guiding learning through diverse pathways.*
- 4. We believe in learning as a social endeavor, taking place in the cultural context of the child, family, school, and broader community. To this end, we see school and family as partners in a child's education.*
- 5. We believe that social and emotional development are important cornerstones of education. Our students learn to respect diversity in all its forms, problem solve social conflicts, and be advocates for themselves and others.*
- 6. We believe in connecting students to the larger world outside the school walls through relationships with community resources and the natural environment. We help students cultivate a sense of place and understanding of, and appreciate for, the interconnectedness of the world in which they live.*
- 7. We believe in the importance of documenting student work and experiences in order to make learning visible to students, families, and our school community.*



What Our Approach Looks Like in the Early Childhood Grades

Our early childhood program (Pre-K and K) is play-based, allowing for student exploration. Teachers facilitate social learning, helping our youngest students gain the skills necessary to work and play with others and navigate a group learning environment.

In the early years we balance emergent curriculum, in which projects and topics arise from the interests and questions of children, with curriculum that is more teacher-directed.

In our half-day Pre-K Program, the domains of math, literacy, art, and science are introduced through the availability of engaging materials, teacher-guided provocations and projects, and exploratory play.

As students transition to full-day Kindergarten, exploration continues both indoors and outdoors, with the integration of small-group, direct teaching experiences. Concepts are presented using a hands-on approach to learning, as students are given a variety of modes through which to learn new material.

What Our Approach Looks Like in the Lower Grades 1st & 2nd

In first and second grades students have repetitive exposure to concepts and skills through concrete materials, exploration, and direct teaching. This occurs within the context of a hands-on environment in which multiple pathways to learning – verbal, visual, tactile, etcetera are accessed. Exploration continues to be nurtured, while basic skills are taught as a means for a larger purpose. The shift from a more emergent curriculum to a more interdisciplinary model begins to take place, as students work on projects and thematic learning that bridge subject areas and continue to foster creativity.

What Our Approach Looks Like in Grades 3rd, 4th & 5th

Students enter the upper grades of 3-5 ready to use their basic building block skills for larger, in-depth projects and interdisciplinary studies. Increasing independence is nurtured as students gain command over the tools of their own learning. Projects become longer term as students refine their work, incorporate feedback, and go into greater depth with concepts and topics. A sense of responsibility is fostered as students prepare for the transition to middle school grades.

What Our Approach (will) Look Like in Grades 6th, 7th & 8th

Students in grades 6 through 8 continue growth toward both greater independence and increased collaboration through a blended multi-age and grade-leveled program. Students begin moving between teachers for subjects, while maintaining a homeroom that builds community and a study adult presence. Curriculum is based around in-depth studies into rich topics that span subject areas and offer continued skill-building and content coverage along with longer term projects, collaborative discussions, and hands-on opportunities for showing and understanding.



What Our Graduates Can Do

Fiddlehead students leave our school with the skills necessary to think critically, collaborate with others, communicate effectively, and problem solve creatively. Because Fiddlehead education focuses on the whole child, our students develop not only broad academic proficiency, but also skills such as confidence, compassion, and resilience that are vital for constructive & impactful citizenship. Our students are encouraged to engage with the world around them as they continue to learn and grow.

Enrollment

- *218 Letters of Intent to Enroll were received for September 2025, an all-time high. We saw this in particular with Pre-K which prompted us to add an additional classroom.*
- *FRL - 36%*
- *Sixteen school districts (28 towns) represented.*

Mission, Core Values & Academic Program

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching and learning. As described in our educational philosophy statement, we hold some fundamentals of the Reggio Approach as core to our program throughout the grade span:

- ***The image of the child*** - children are viewed as capable, curious and competent, active in the construction of knowledge and the pursuit of relationships. Students are the protagonists of their own learning.
- ***Children's relationships and interactions within a system*** - children are seen in relation to their family, school, community and the larger society.
- ***The role of families*** - families are vital to their children's learning and to the learning community. Family participation is invited and encouraged.
- ***The role of space*** - space encourages interaction, relationship and communication. The environment is considered "the third teachers".
- ***Teachers and children as partners in learning*** - teachers are considered researchers and co-constructors of knowledge with the children. Collaboration is fostered between the children, teachers, parents and the community. Children assist each other in learning taking on the role of teacher, and teachers take on the role of facilitator and learner.

Fiddlehead Practices

Curriculum - After carefully planning a rich and thoughtful environment, teachers observe children and document their learning. They then reflect, plan and take action. This dynamic curriculum process includes assessment, goal setting, and reflection on the part of both teachers and students.



Interdisciplinary, project-based learning is central. Children engage in investigations both in the classroom and outdoors. Students explore their community, identify and solve problems, and express their ideas and understandings through a variety of forms and media, from observational drawings and mathematical explanations to stories and songs.

Basic skills are taught and practiced not just in isolation, but as a means to a greater end. The building blocks of learning form the foundation upon which students can argue their opinions, express their thinking in a variety of ways, analyze new information, and synthesize new knowledge with prior understandings.

Documentation - Teachers document children's learning through notes, photographs and examples of children's work. This makes learning visible to children, parents and teachers, and informs next steps in curriculum. Older children participate in documentation of learning. We have seen great strides in our documentation process, which includes student self-reflection. This year we instituted a new school wide documentation format that is used for classroom communication and also monthly whole school newsletters. This format focuses the communication on **WHAT, SO WHAT, and NOW WHAT**: **WHAT** (what the students or class did), **SO WHAT** (why that experience was important; what students learned); and **NOW WHAT** (how we might facilitate the learning further, go deeper, or extend). Framing documentation in this way brings us beyond what children did to what they learned and begins to reveal for families and the larger community the deeper meaning behind students' activities and experiences.

Assessment - Fiddlehead uses a broad and evolving portfolio of assessment to monitor and report student growth. This includes classroom work, projects, documentation of conversations and experiences; curriculum-based assessments and rubrics; and normed assessments and standardized tests. We implement a balance of formative and summative assessment systems that can help plan instruction; identify students in need of additional support, intervention or challenge; reveal trends within classes and across grade levels; track student growth; and supply necessary data for reporting out to families, the Charter Commission, and the DOE. Documented below are some cornerstones of our holistic assessment system:

- **Portfolios and Documentation.** Teachers identify children's thinking and learning through observation and documentation. Documentation is an ongoing and critical component of the assessment process and integral to the Reggio Emilia Approach. Students are engaged in assessing their own work and their involvement in this assessment process increases with age and maturity, fosters independent thinking, creativity, goal setting, organizational skills, and use of technology. Documentation methods include audio, video, photography, and work samples. Student work is displayed in and around the school and in individual portfolios.



- **Work Sampling System (WSS) from Pearson.** *The WSS is a framework for portfolio-based assessment of each student, grades PK through 8th. Teachers use developmental checklists to document, and then to summarize children's growth in each domain, and prepare summary reports to share with families three times per year. Teachers, children and parents view, discuss and reflect on these records of learning as a dynamic process and tailor instruction to the needs of individual students. This method of assessment replaces a traditional student grading system. The WSS includes developmental guidelines and checklists in seven major curriculum areas, with a recent revision including performance indicators tied to state and national standards, including the Common Core. Summary and disaggregated reports are prepared to inform student learning and the curriculum, and display effectiveness in the teaching and learning process. Ongoing professional development has ensured understanding of the WSS performance indicators and increased inter-rater reliability among teachers. Assessment results are provided to the Maine Charter School Commission, as required for program accountability purposes, shared with parents to show progress, and used by teachers to inform instruction. The school's administration and board review results and use the information to inform strategic planning and ensure performance measures are met.*
- **Standardized Assessments.**
 - **Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).** *Assessments were conducted for grades 2 through 8 and students took the test three times this year – fall, winter, and spring. 2nd grades take the MAP Growth Assessment in both reading and math. 3rd-8th graders take MAP Growth in reading, math, and language, as well as the Through Year Assessment in both reading and math.*
 - **Maine Science Assessments.** *Were conducted for 5th and 8th graders in the spring.*

We have a data analysis protocol to examine the results of the NWEA. This analysis focuses on making the data usable – for planning classroom curriculum and areas of focus, for identifying student learning gaps or areas in need of intervention, and for matching instruction to meet student growth goals. We use NWEA as one of the measures by which we identify students in need of RTI services. As always, we continue to analyze and refine our practices. We continue to debrief our use of the NWEA and work toward its efficiency and efficacy within our program and assessment portfolio.

Special Student Populations

We are starting to see our percentage of special education students decrease, nearing close to 26% anticipated for next year, from an all-time high of 32%. Each student has different needs, and the team continues to work to meet those needs.



*Over the past few weeks, we have worked on projecting what our special education needs may be for next year. This year we had fifty-seven identified Special Education students, and we are anticipating 52 students next year based on the knowledge we have to date of our incoming students. **We continue to see a rise in Autism Spectrum children at our school and we will continue to build our skills around Autism spectrum experience for our students.***

Are Students Academically Successful?

We continue to hone our program to ensure academic success for all students. This past year was about holding tightly to what we have established and reflecting on areas of improvement.

This was our seventh year implementing a more extensive RTI (Response to Intervention) program. This system provided a framework for identifying students in need of support and supplying the proper interventions to aid in their academic success. We also began to develop more depth and clarity within each tier of the structure. The RTI program continues to provide direct intervention to individuals and small groups of students and will act as a resource to classroom teachers implementing Tier I interventions in their classrooms. And even though it has been successful, we added a Special Education Teacher Assistant in each classroom to support the Lead Teacher and the students. More Eureka Math training will continue this year as we onboard new staff members. We have learned that Eureka Math is better suited in the upper grades to see math gains.

In alignment with our philosophy of looking at the whole child/whole student, we continue to define academic success broadly and by numerous measures. We consider a student's performance on standardized tests as one data point in the whole of a child's portfolio of work. This body of work includes success with classroom curricula and projects, success on classroom-based assessments, and success gauged through observations of children at work and play. In addition to those aspects that are more easily measured, we look for student success in the realm of approach to learning. This includes attributes such as curiosity, persistence, resilience, and more.

What do test scores say about the school's academic success?

Academic Growth - NWEA Scores Fall 2024 - Spring 2025

Proficiency

- 63% of 3rd-8th grade students are at or above the state expectation in reading.
- 40% of 3rd-8th grade students are at or above the state expectation in math.
- 47% of 3rd grade students are at or above the state expectation in reading.

Growth

- 59% of 2nd-8th graders met their fall-spring reading growth goal as set by NWEA.
- 56% of 2nd-8th graders met their fall-spring language growth goal as set by NWEA.



- 45% of 2nd-8th graders met their fall-spring math goal as set by NWEA.

Are we implementing our academic program as we envisioned?

We are implementing our program even better than we envisioned, ESPECIALLY in the lower grades! Our main concern is to be responsible to the students we serve in our building. We have found over those past TWELVE years that the students who are attracted to our school might need something slightly different than we had anticipated. To address the needs of our population, we must be able to adapt and be flexible while also keeping core values intact.

We continue to hold our philosophy tightly, staying true to core values about children, teachers, and the teaching and learning process. At the same time, we have found over these past TWELVE years an increasing number of students who require greater scaffolding in order to be successful at structures requiring self-regulation. This is a place where we can be responsive – teaching the necessary skills and building more external structure in our program while also retaining the choice, exploration, wonder, and creativity. We find many of our Special Education population actually do better when outside and connecting with nature.

Climate and Discipline

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (FSAS) strives to provide a peaceful, enriching and safe environment for all students to grow and learn. We have worked tirelessly over the past SIX years to implement PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), a research-based approach that encompasses: identifying and teaching school-wide expectations; building a positive school climate and culture; positively acknowledging students for following expectations; creating consistent responses to problem behavior; tracking and using student behavioral data for decision making; applying a team approach and problem-solving protocol; and merging the multi-tiered system of supports for both academic and behavioral needs. We look forward to continuing our work with PBIS, growing to include advanced tiers of supports next year.

Parent & Student Survey

We had a higher participation rate than the past year for Staff and Students. Annually, we take this information from the survey and use it to set goals for the next year. The primary take away from our survey is that our culture has been damaged by the pandemic, the separation that was necessary during the pandemic, still needs to be rebuilt. We will continue to work on rebuilding our community connection for families and for the staff. Our response rates were:

- *Staff/Teacher - 60%*
- *Families - 101 respondents out of approximately 125 families, or 80%*



- *Students - 90% response rate for grades 3rd-8th. We still need time to analyze this data and to incorporate it into our goals.*

Are you an organizational success? Yes!

Management and Operations

- ***Staffing.*** *We continue to build an amazing team here at Fiddlehead. I dare say the best yet. They lean in, step up and care deeply for each other and the students. We thankfully moved beyond the movement of staff from the pandemic burnout that all schools saw these past few years. We are back and Fiddlehead is poised for another amazing year. One of our key administrators this year needed to move to Canada in January and thankfully we were able to work through it together remotely. It was not easy on the team on the floor, but we made it. We mutually decided to let go of that relationship and reflected once again on our schools' needs. We changed our Special Education Director position and are moving towards a Special Education Coordinator. Thankfully, a top candidate was in the house! Jessica Shaw will be our new Special Education Coordinator.*
- ***New Staff Additions.*** *We did some excellent work this past spring in analyzing our educational model's needs. We are adding a Positive Behavior Interventionist position as well as a new Learning Lab for next year. We continue to use our Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PEPG) process that all faculty members follow in terms of assessment and evaluation. Training for next year will go back to some basics, CLASSROOM management, and an Instructional Support Person in every classroom! Each Instructional Support Person will also train this spring and over the summer to receive their BHP (Behavioral Health Professional) Certificate. These additional skills will help us add more tools to our staff tool box.*
- ***Calendars & Schedules.*** *Our calendar remains the same as it has in the past few years. Overall, Early Release days and Anytime-Anywhere days have been very successful for reflection, documentation and learning. The school will continue with 175 student days in our School Calendar year. The time will be from 8:20a.m.-2:50p.m. We will continue to tighten our daily schedule so that students can continue to access individualized instruction at their appropriate readiness level for the academics.*
- ***Student recruitment, enrollment and retention.*** *Our student recruitment efforts are still very strong. At our last lottery we had 175 Intent to Enroll submissions.*
- ***Parent and Community Involvement.*** *This aspect of our school continues to be one of our strengths, though we can never take it for granted. We have wonderfully involved parent and community groups and the community is eager to reconnect. We brought back several opportunities for families to participate in from field trips (Libby Hill, Thompson's, Frahllich's, etc.), as well as inviting families to these off-site locations for presentations and celebrations.*



We have a newly branded PTO, of which is called the NEST! We are excited to continue to work with them in the coming year!

Are we a governance success?

We have a very strong team with highly skilled administration, staff, and Board Members who are passionate and committed to the mission and vision of this organization. The governing board and the administration have clearly defined roles and continue to work on clarity around these roles as the organization evolves. We are happy to report that the Board of Directors is nearly full, once again. William Doughty continues to be the chair to the Board of Directors this coming year.

As part of our reflection and planning process, the Executive Director, Principal, and Board will continue to strengthen and refine internal communication and roles and responsibilities. The Executive Director, who has now established two non-profits during the past twenty-three years, continues to work hand in hand with the Chair of this Board of Directors.

Transparency

We all recognize that transparency is important in so many ways. From the beginning the Board & Staff identified transparency as a focus. We continue conversation of transparency in all Board aspects from budgeting to staffing and will remain cognizant of this best practice approach.

Are we a financial success?

Finance Committee members:

- *Roger Preston - Board Treasurer/Committee Chair*
- *Bill Doughty - Committee Member*
- *Alison Moser - Committee Member*
- *Jacinda Cotton-Castro - Executive Director*

The committee mostly meets once a month, occasionally more often, to review the income statements and ensure spending is in line with the budget. This year was particularly hard in finding the right people to do this work. Thankfully, we have a contract with Flaherty Financial and they have extensive nonprofit work. We also have a new Business Administrator that has strong Quickbooks experience.

Finance Committee

We had a very good audit report this year as we continue to improve systems and within the proposed framework for next year.

Fundraising/Development Committee

We have fundraising as a below the line objective that way we do not count on fundraising, however, it helps to supplement our needs. Our plan is to continue to work on Development and enlist former



Board Members to help with a soon to be created Advisory Committee. The singular purpose will be in supporting the Executive Director and their efforts to increase annual donations, and long-term giving programs.

Additional Programming

We have grown and continue to expand our Afterschool Enrichment Program that was successful in meeting our bottom line. In addition, we have added in Private Music Lessons, as well as a third year of SUMMER Camp Programs to our community offerings this summer. This funding will eventually be able to help greatly in sustaining our organization as these programs continue to expand.

Facilities

SPACE is not as much of a concern as it has been in the past few years. We are looking at both long-and-short-term plan needs. Our Facility Committee is led by our Chair, William Doughty. We have explored heat pumps and other efficient energy options – as well as partial funding through Efficiency Maine. We decided to stick with replacing our current HVAC units with similar units, due to cost. This fall we plan to replace our second HVAC unit and have a schedule to replace more units as the year progresses.

Transportation

Our relatively new bus continues to operate, and we paid off our loan a few years back and hope it lasts a couple more without too much maintenance. We use our bus extensively for field trips to the orchard and the farm with our newly developed outdoor classroom expansions.

Insurance

We work with Kyes Insurance out of Farmington who is one of Maine's largest school insurance providers. We have had from the beginning vehicle, liability and D&O insurance. We have a good working relationship with Kyes.

Food Service

Children bring their own healthy lunches to our school. We continue to work with our PTO to develop a weekend backpack program as needs present themselves.

Relationship with the Maine Charter School Commission

We have an outstanding, mutually respectful relationship with the Maine Charter School Commission. We do not hesitate to ask them questions and they are quick to provide the answers they can find. We feel very supported and confident that they want us to be as successful as we want to be, and also hold



us accountable for our Performance Framework and to the standards that we eagerly aim to meet and exceed. We also received two grants from the Commission this past year – THANK YOU!



Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

Board President: Dr. Mary Callan

Head of School: Ryan Anthony



NARRATIVE

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, located in Hinckley, is in its fourteenth year of operation and serves 177 students from 51 cities and towns across the state, but mostly from Kennebec and Somerset Counties.

23.16% of MeANS students have an IEP which is higher than the state average and 71.19% of families are economically disadvantaged, significantly higher than the statewide average of 37.50%.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- College Readiness
- Graduation
- School Culture and Climate
- Student Persistence
- Intensives

Areas of Focus:

- Academic Proficiency
- Student Attendance

Student Achievement

MeANS administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 10 and results from the SY2024-25 administration show students not meeting expectations in either subject, despite having exceeded expectations in reading and approaching expectations in math a year ago. Leadership shared that the 10th grade class “has a lot of academic challenges” and are “disappointed with the results”.

Yet, the school uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and meets framework expectations with 82% of students meeting the college readiness indicator in both reading and 84% in math.

Chronic absenteeism continues to be an area of focus for the school and while still not meeting performance framework expectations, has decreased significantly over the past several years. While MeANS enrolls students for many cities and towns across Maine, the majority of their students reside in Kennebec and Somerset Counties. Kennebec County has a 24% chronic absenteeism rate, while



Somerset County's chronic absenteeism rate is 32%. MeANS reports a 35% chronic absenteeism rate this past school year.

State-reported graduation rates appear to be lower than internal school data. This may be, in part, a result of the state closing the school year on June 30th yet MeANS' school year extends into July. There are students who will return for an intentional 5th year, but most students who enroll, persist through to graduation and the school-reported rate is closer to 92%. Some students enroll, but never begin attending school and haven't enrolled elsewhere.

93% of MeANS seniors successfully participate in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires schools to administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. School culture and climate continues to be strong, meeting or exceeding expectations across all stakeholder groups.

Organizational Sustainability

MeANS submits required documents to the Commission mostly on time and accurately, but this past year governing board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes were posted late and not meeting framework expectations. This is attributed to the transition of the MeANS Head of School in December 2024, but should be a focus in the upcoming school year.

The MeANS board is active and meets regularly throughout the school year, but failed to complete annual required board training obligations, with only 11% complete. We encourage the board to focus on the required trainings in the upcoming school year to ensure compliance.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, MeANS falls in low to moderate risk on five of eight financial metrics. Enrollment, the three-year margin and two-year cash flows measures all fall in the high risk category. The board continues to closely monitor these metrics. Lower enrollment during FY25 reduced the state subsidy for FY26. The school generated an operating surplus in FY25 and anticipates the surplus will offset the lower FY26 revenue. MeANS also expects enrollment to increase and bring the school to a more secure financial position. MeANS engaged the services of Berry Dunn, BDMP Assurance LLP and received a clean financial audit for FY24.



School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence continues to be an area of strength for MeANS with 91% of students persisting throughout the school year, and 96% submitting an intent to re-enroll form for the upcoming school year.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) Grade 10 - 35% of MeANS high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 10 - 17% of MeANS high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Not Meeting) - Male (Not Meeting) - Female (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Not Meeting) - Female (Not Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Not Meeting)	Approaching Between <-15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 65%	Not Meeting
5-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 78%	Not Meeting
6-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 75%	Not Meeting



Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - 82% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 239 or above in Reading; 84% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 226 or above in Math	Meeting
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Meeting)	Meeting
Post-Secondary Activity - School reports 93%	Exceeding
FAFSA Support - MeANS provided support to 41% of families/students	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	35% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - School Fit - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results - School Climate - 90th Percentile - Safety - 90th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 80th Percentile - Teacher/Student Relationships - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Leadership - 90th Percentile - Professional Learning - 70th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 40th Percentile	Meeting 3 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results School Climate - 90th Percentile	Meeting



- Leadership - <i>60th Percentile</i> - Professional Learning - <i>80th Percentile</i> - Feedback and Coaching - <i>40th Percentile</i>	3 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	7 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agendas/2 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>89% on time; 100% accurate</i>	Meeting
Board Training - <i>37 requirements; 4 completed (11%)</i>	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>36 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	High Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	High Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	High Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

**Based on FY25 QTR4 financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - <i>162 of 178 students (91%)</i>	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - <i>110 of 114 students (96%)</i>	Exceeding



School Customization

Intensive Experiences	Exceeding - 88%
Post-Secondary Opportunities	Exceeding - 100%
Campus Graduation	Meeting - 92%
NWEA Testing - Campus	Exceeding - 96%
NWEA Testing - Threshold	Meeting - 83%

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Overview

In reflecting back across the year, both with our faculty, our senior class, and through our data, it was reaffirming to recognize that we had an incredibly strong year as a school. Despite the challenges that we faced with reorganizing our Threshold leadership model and being without a Head of School from the end of December until the end of July, this year truly demonstrated just how strong and resilient our core structure is both as a collaborative leadership team and as an engaged faculty and study body. As we continued to embrace our mission wholeheartedly, we saw our attendance continue to improve, our families and students appreciate the supportive and positive culture of our school, and our seniors find an increasing level of success in their post-secondary pursuits. Although we will need to continue to work on a few areas, including cementing a sustainable model for Threshold's regrowth, improving daily attendance, and raising the bar in our mathematics department, we are ending the year on an optimistic note with a promising new Head of School, a full staff, and a connected and supportive community.

Academic

This year, we continued to raise the bar academically for our students both in their daily classes, in new course offerings, and in preparing them for life after high school. As a school, we added a collection of new, mission-driven courses including: Woodworking, Fiber Arts, Intro to Blacksmithing, a Hybrid Agriculture/Earth Science course, Social Emotional Health, and Physical Health, while providing our upperclassmen with more voice and choice in their courses including: Psychology, World Cultures, A.P. Language and Composition, and A.P. Environmental Science. Three major highlights that came out of these pushes were: enabling significantly more students to complete college-level courses on campus; having a third of our A.P. Lang & Comp and half of our A.P. Enviro students receive a 3 or higher on their exams; and watching our core group of A.P. Enviro students lead our school to its first ever Envirothen state championship and placement in the international tournament in Alberta, Canada.



With regards to assessment, our culture surrounding test taking has made some significant strides over the past few years, and this year we had very high participation across the board, exceeding expectations for our participation rates. One area that we will need to focus on is our Through Year data, as our scores felt lower than usual, even with the understanding that this class has very low math and reading scores across the board. On a more positive note, our Accuplacer scores grew in both Math and Reading for our graduation class, with 84% and 82% respectively of our seniors demonstrating college preparedness.

Through our partnership with Gear Up RISE Maine, this year we saw the most college applications and acceptances to colleges and Universities that our school has ever experienced. While many students continue to opt into the workforce right after graduating, we have had several apply for local apprenticeships as well, and nearly half of this year's graduating class chose to attend a 2-year or 4-year institution. As with every year, the state's data around seniors who have left our school but still technically show up on our list of students will hurt our graduation rate, but, per our own custom domain, 92% of our campus seniors graduated this year, with 2 opting to return to finish out their final credits.

Through our monthly "In Services", and regular team planning sessions, we spent a considerable amount of time this year cementing our Natural Science Intensives curricula, which paid dividends as we had a significant increase in student engagement, as well as some incredible field trips and final projects. As our Panorama data demonstrates, students continue to feel incredibly supported, safe, and connected to their teachers, while our push on rigorous expectations has gone up. And while attendance will continue to be an area of focus, we continue to move in the right direction with our chronic absenteeism dropping to 35% school wide (with 9 of these chronically absent students having withdrawn well before the end of the year). What we have also found this year is that more and more students are drawn to our school for outdoor learning, hands-on projects, overnight excursions, and our Natural Science Intensives, which have become a true calling card for MeANS. Beyond this, we continue to receive interest from other schools, organizations, and educators from across the state and the D.O.E. including Governor Mills and Commissioner Makin, who we hosted this summer to celebrate the Year of Youth in Agriculture.

Organizational

As an organization, we have solidified a strong and consistent structure through our unique 11-month calendar, a full-inclusion cohort schedule for students by grade level, and regular faculty meetings that include Leadership Meetings, Professional Development Meetings, MTSS Meetings, and regular All Faculty Meetings to debrief each week.



As was mentioned in the overview, the largest challenges organizationally speaking this year came from having to pivot as a leadership team, as we began the new year with a new co-leadership model for Threshold, adopted a co-head of school model for the school after Matt's departure mid year, and hired one of our Ed Tech IIs on full time as a long term substitute for a teacher who had to extend her maternity leave. With all that said, we end the year with very strong teacher retention (hiring a new Social Studies teacher on campus and three new Threshold teachers), adding a Special Ed support position, and returning to our full administrative roles with Ryan Anthony beginning as our new Head of School this summer.

With regards to enrollment, this year proved to be our strongest to date as we were able to garner enough interest early on to host our first ever Lottery and added waitlists to Threshold as well as our 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes. On top of this, we made strong strides in continuing to demonstrate high student persistence rates with 91% of our students completing the year, and 96% reenrolling for the 25/26 school year. As it stands now, all of our 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes on campus are overenrolled, and our 9th grade class is at 21 students with our busiest time of enrollment ahead of us. With all of this in mind we feel very confident that we will meet or exceed our goal of enrolling 185 students between campus and Threshold.

Governance

At the conclusion of last year, one area of focus that we identified was solidifying a solid Board of Directors for the year ahead. Thankfully, we have successfully added five strong, new Board Members to the mix (including two alumni, the parent of an alum, and our founder; Emanuel Pariser) and were able to successfully appoint a collection of motivated Officers and Committee Heads before the end of the school year to lead us into the 2025-2026 school year.

Throughout this year, there has been an incredibly positive and collaborative working relationship between MeANS Leadership and our Board of Directors. From supporting fundraising campaigns, to navigating challenges with Goodwill Hinckley, to conducting a comprehensive Head of School Search mid year, all while supporting Pat Henyan and Evan Coleman in their interim leadership roles.

Thankfully, the partnership between the leadership and the Board has been incredibly strong this year as we've taken everything in stride and cemented a strong plan for on-boarding our promising new Head of School, Ryan Anthony, as he begins his tenure at MeANS this week.



Finance

As was alluded to last year, for the FY26 Budget, the Maine Academy of Natural Science developed a multi-year plan that utilizes the surplus generated during the FY25 fiscal year to cover the losses budgeted during the FY26 and FY27 fiscal years, due to the hard work of our Business Manager, Ashley Hyde. These losses were forecasted with a teacher shortage going into the 2024/2025 school year and student enrollment was capped to ensure adequate staffing in order to maintain a feasible teacher/student ratio, leading to a surplus that could offset losses while the school rebuilt enrollment steadily over the next two fiscal years (FY26 & FY27). This gradual increase allowed for minimal impact to student programs but set the school on a course to reach the enrollment goal of 200 students by FY27.

With regards to financial management, Berry Dunn presented a clean audit for fiscal year 2024 and cash on hand has increased during FY25. For our facilities, rent for the Moody School building has increased by \$20,000 for FY26 (for a total annual rent of \$220,000) and will increase again next year to \$230,000. Meanwhile, this year, MeANS will pay off the Right of Use Finance Lease for our vehicles and will on this fleet. However, we will need to spend some time evaluating and creating some strategic plans in the years ahead for how to replace and refortify our buses and vans.

Through our partnership with Goodwill Hinckley, our food service contract did increase administrative rates considerably, and we are in the process of evaluating other possible options with more competitive rates. However, on a more positive note, faculty and staff health and dental benefits went out to bid and were negotiated at a better rate, with better employee benefits, while liability, vehicle, workman's comp, and cyber and professional insurance increased at industry forecast.

Summary

Despite the obstacles that have presented themselves during the 2024/2025 school year, what remains evidence is that our hard work over the past few years has paid off and MeANS has built a solid, resilient foundation rooted in a culture of collaboration and shared values. Amidst what for many schools would be a tumultuous, overwhelming year, our faculty, board of directors, and administrative team rose to the challenge, and continued to move us in the right direction while raising the bar for the quality and type of learning that we value as a school. While there remain several areas to focus on in the coming months, there is a collective sense of hope for the future as we continue to improve each year by embracing our mission and in committing to the type of innovative, hands-on public education that students in Maine deserve.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Maine Arts Academy

Board President: Linda Warner

Head of School: Heather King



NARRATIVE

Maine Arts Academy, located in Augusta, is in its tenth year of operation and serves 245 students from 71 cities and towns (12 of 16 counties) throughout Maine.

17.14% of MeAA students have an IEP - just shy of the statewide average; while 40.82% of families are economically disadvantaged, slightly higher than the statewide average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading Proficiency
- Subgroup achievement
- College Readiness
- Graduation
- Student Attendance
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly

Areas of Focus:

- Math Proficiency
- Student School Culture and Climate

Student Achievement

Maine Arts Academy administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 10. MeAA exceeds framework expectations in reading, and outperforms the state average by 30 percentage points. 39% of MeAA tenth graders are “at or above expectations” in Math – approaching framework expectations - and is an improvement from last year. Math has been, and should continue to be, a focus area for the school.

Subgroup performance remains extremely strong – with all groups exceeding framework expectations in reading - some outperforming state averages by 50 percentage points. Overall, subgroups are meeting expectations in math.

The school uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and 97% of students have met the college readiness indicators in both reading and math. It is important to note that all subgroups are meeting or exceeding framework expectations.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be a strength for the school; continually meeting framework expectations year after year. While MeAA enrolls students throughout the state of Maine, the majority of their students reside in Kennebec County where the chronic absenteeism rate is approximately 24%. MeAA reports that only 15% of its student population were considered chronically absent this past school year.

Graduation rates remain strong. MeAA reports that 98% of seniors graduated in June, consistently exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education.

100% of MeAA seniors successfully participate in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. For the third year in a row, Maine Arts Academy students responded unfavorably to the survey questions. Family, teacher, and staff results remain strong. Once again, we encourage the MeAA governing board and administration to prioritize the students' experience of school climate and culture in the upcoming school year.

Organizational Sustainability

MeAA submits required documents to the Commission on time and accurately. The board is active - and growing - meeting regularly throughout the school year, and completing most of their annual board training requirements.

The Commission requires the "timely posting of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes". This is an area of the framework that the board should focus on, having partially met or not meeting framework expectations for several years in a row.

Financial Management and Viability

Financial management at Maine Arts Academy is sound. The school has consistently met its liabilities, including payroll, debt service, and benefits, and annual audits are clean with no findings. The purchase of a permanent, expansive facility in 2023 demonstrated long-term investment and stability, and the school has rebounded from the mid-term financial variability associated with that purchase.

School Mission and Student Persistence

An area of focus for MeAA has been student persistence throughout the school year and their efforts paid off this year with 88% of students enrolled on 10/1/24 still enrolled on the last day of school - up from 65% a year ago.



PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) Grade 10 - 89% of MeAA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 10 - 39% of MeAA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching Between ≥-15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)	Exceeding ≥5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Meeting) - Female (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Meeting Between ≥-5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - School reports 98%	Exceeding
5-Year High School Graduation Rate	Not Applicable
6-Year High School Graduation Rate	Not Applicable
Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - 97% of MeAA students are meeting the College Readiness Indicator in both Reading and Math	Exceeding
Accuplacer - Subgroups Students with IEPs - 91% (Exceeding)	Exceeding



- Economically Disadvantaged - 87% (Exceeding) - Students with a 504 Plan - 100% (Exceeding) - Male - 84% (Meeting) - Female - 100% (Exceeding)	85% or more students are meeting or exceeding the goal in both reading and math
Participation in Post-Secondary Activity - <i>School reports 100%</i>	Exceeding
FAFSA Support - <i>MeAA provided support to 61% of families/students</i>	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	15% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - School Fit - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results - School Climate - 10th Percentile - Safety - 90th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 20th Percentile - Teacher-Student Relationships - 30th Percentile	Not Meeting Fewer than 2 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Leadership - 90th Percentile - Professional Learning - 99th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 90th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Leadership - 99th Percentile - Professional Learning - 90th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting



Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	Meeting - 12 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	2 Agendas/1 Minutes Late
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - 96% on time; 100% accurate	Exceeding
Board Training - 13 requirements; 11 completed (85%)	Approaching
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - 36 Days Cash on Hand	Moderate Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - None	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	High Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	Low Risk
Financial Obligations Coverage Ratio	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - School submitted 3-Year Plan	Meeting

*Based on FY25 QTR4 Financials

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - 215 of 245 students (88%)	Meeting
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - 136 of 151 students (90%)	Meeting

School Customization

At the end of their graduating year, 85%-95% of MeAA students will have participated in at least two activities to share their art with the community such as performances, art shows, dance competitions, volunteer performances, fashion shows, and other opportunities to share their passion for the arts.	Exceeding 98%
--	----------------------



At the end of their graduating year, 85% of MeAA students will have met proficiency or higher on two or more performances based on the performance rubrics.	Exceeding 98%
---	----------------------

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

We have continued to meet our mission and vision to provide a rigorous academic and well rounded visual and performing arts curriculum, educating students in grades 9-12 (soon to be 7th and 8th grade too!) from across the state of Maine, in our 9th year of operation. By providing a rigorous academic and arts curriculum, we continuously strive to raise the academic bar by meeting students where they are at but holding high expectations. This is evidence in the math growth we have achieved this year. We also continue to provide a well-rounded arts education by offering numerous arts choices ranging from theater, photography, film studies, visual arts, digital art, dance, vocals and instrumentation. Students have numerous opportunities to go out in the community and perform or showcase their art. We have provided 17 opportunities to perform or showcase art in the community this year. We continuously find success with accepting and fostering a climate where students feel they belong and are not bullied. Numerous students come to us from other schools because they feel they were bullied or did not fit in. We provide a home for them at Maine Arts Academy and instill confidence in them through the arts.

86% of students with IEPs performed at or above state expectations on the Accuplacer in both reading and math. 100% of students with 504 plans performed above state expectations on the Accuplacer in both reading and math assessment!

91% of 10th graders were at or above state expectations in Reading/ELA! Only 3 students were below state expectations.

95% of the 104 students assessed by the Accuplacer this year performed at or above state expectations in both reading and math. 2% of eleventh grade students performed below state expectations in reading and 5% of eleventh grade students performed below state expectations in math. These students will be reassessed in January 2026 prior to graduating. 64% of students assessed by the SAT scored above state expectations in evidence-based reading and writing.

Through Year Assessment achievement percentiles improved in math this year. Fall data showed 19% of tenth grade students well below the state expectation. Spring data shows only 2% in this category presently. 21% of our students demonstrated growth in math at the 61st to 80th percentile and another



25% grew above the 80th percentile! Through Year Assessment achievement in reading remains high, at the 66th percentile. 100% of economically disadvantaged students performed at or above state expectations in reading on the Through Year Assessment.

This year, we strived to work on school climate by putting clubs back into our schedule. Clubs ranged from National Honor Society, Student Council, Dungeon and Dragons, Chess, Running Club, Outdoor Club, Biking Club, Math Support Club, Debate Club, Theater Club, Dance Club, Literary Magazine Club, etc...We also added some student activities like Family Fall Night with an open mic. We had 500 people attend. We had an afternoon outside teaching students how to make S'mores and Open Mic.

Students who violate the student handbook or school board policy are referred to the principal. For most first infractions, restorative justice practices are implemented and parents are notified. For first infractions, students also receive a warning that if the conduct reoccurs, behavioral consequences will intensify. Administrators facilitate mediated conversations between parties when there is a resolvable conflict between students with great success. Parents are also notified of this tiered-response method implemented by the school. Repeated offenses result in detentions, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. If student behavior interferes with the normal daily functioning of the school or presents a safety concern, the school meets with families and establishes a safety plan for the student to adhere to when returning to school from a suspension.

We have continued to strive to implement our arts programming as the school envisioned it when it was established but oftentimes students come to us because they are bullied or didn't fit in somewhere else and are beginners in the arts. We use arts to engage them and get them hooked on a passion! Originally, the founders of the school established it to attract students who were proficient in the arts. We are starting from scratch with many of our students and we work to help them gain proficiency in the arts. Our dance department and our visual arts departments do attract students who are highly talented. Many of our dance students come with years of dancing experience. Our visual arts department is thriving as well. Each year it grows with more students interested in either digital art, visual arts, photography or film making. Our Theater department has also flourished this year performing two complete plays at the University of Maine at Augusta. Some of the other departments have struggled to attract students who are highly proficient. Our music department competes with other large schools who have more money, more resources and more staff. This has been a struggle and we continue to find ways to be innovative with this department so it is unique and carves out a one of a kind niche.

We have continued to implement our academic programming as we envisioned. Academics are going well and have been a success! Teachers are engaged and have begun the tradition of team teaching each year in January for a special unit of their choosing. Oftentimes this allows the arts and academics



to collaborate on an interesting topic. An example of this was French and Theater collaborated on a unit focusing on French Theater.

Our test scores show that academics are a success! Our Reading/ELA scores continue to be far above the state with preliminary spring Through Year Testing achievement showing 93% of tenth graders at our above state level for reading. Our math scores continue to improve and students have demonstrated tremendous growth. Preliminary spring Through Year Testing achievement shows 70% of tenth graders showed growth in math.

Our school is safe! We have worked hard to create a building that is set up with bullet resistant safety glass, cameras, doors that require scan cards and signage. We have encouraged staff and students to "say something if you see something". We use a modified version of the "Alice" program to encourage all staff to use the protocol.

Students participated in numerous arts performances and we also gave back to our community by hosting a Fall Family Night with over 500 people in attendance, and a Spring Bunny Hop. Students also participated in the United Way Day of Caring and volunteered several hours at different places throughout Augusta. Students helped clear trails at Viles Arboretum. Another group of students cleaned and cut trees at the Capital Area Recreational Facility. Another group painted and cleaned at the Augusta Colonial Theater and another group went to the Veterans Home to provide an art workshop to the residents there. Day of Caring is an annual tradition and it is a wonderful way to have students come together for a great cause. Students also participated in a Homecoming Dance, Winter Ball and Spring Prom. Because students live in and travel from 13 counties, student-centered activities can be challenging outside of school hours, but they have been a success this year! We strive to foster a positive climate for students.

We have a small dedicated parent group who organized a fundraiser and provided breakfast to all the teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week. They also helped set up our new library. Their support has been steady and extremely helpful. A goal for the parent group would be growth! It would be wonderful to have more parents involved but so many of our parents live far and wide.

We are not able to see the results of the Panorama Survey from this year. Last year our staff survey was very high in all categories but our student survey was quite low. We are hoping with the numerous activities we provided this year, student results will be much better. The building improvements should also help with students being more comfortable in the classroom.

Our calendar and schedule is strong and successful. The model for student schedules allows students to take a variety of arts courses in their day to day schedule. We have modeled our new middle school



schedule off of the high school schedule which has worked so well. Middle school students will have several arts opportunities during their day.

Student recruitment and enrollment has improved! We have a dedicated admissions and marketing employee that has a bachelor degree in the field. She has improved our marketing by branding us, creating merchandise, and a mascot. Student life, performances and successes are regularly published. This was the first year Maine Arts Academy had a lottery in the history of the school. At this time, we have a few high school spots left and there is a waiting list for middle school.

Student retention has been more of a struggle since we moved to Augusta, but there are three things that we believe influence this newer pattern. 1. Our free and reduced lunch percentage increased by 14% which leads us to believe that more students struggle with roadblocks. Families move around and housing is less stable. 2. We have heard numerous times this year that students say our academics are harder than the school they transferred from. We have had students tell us this directly and we have had teachers report that students have told them this same thing. We had a teacher report that a student was going back to their previous school because we are much more rigorous. 3. Lastly, many mainstream students enroll and then will leave. We have numerous students who simply do not fit into the mainstream mold and at times this can be overwhelming for the conventional student. We have instituted a "new student enrollment" 2-week check in period to see how a new student is doing, if they need anything and if they are happy at MeAA.

Staffing and human resources has been a success! We have carefully screened applicants through a thorough interview process, adding questions about boundaries, problem solving and social media. Our staff retention rate for the 2024/2025 school year will be 85%. We have 6 total staff out of 40 leaving. 4 staff have given their notice not to return next year (our Principal, long time music teacher moving on to pursuits with Colby and Bowdoin College, our special education director is moving to Georgia and food service director is leaving and not pursuing a food career). We had to let two employees go this year as well. Our employee handbook has been vetted by a human resource company and attorney. Our bus drivers are enrolled in a drug testing pool with the Transportation Association of Maine. If there are any employee complaints or performance issues, they are handled immediately through the correct channels.

Our operations director manages our building seamlessly. He and his employees have single handedly remodeled over 20 rooms so that students are learning in large, well lit classrooms. He also has gotten an entire transportation department established with 7 buses and 7 drivers. Bus drivers are entered into a random drug testing pool and are vetted well for a CDL license and criminal background check.



Both the Head of School and the Principal have worked together for years and have an excellent relationship capitalizing on their different skill sets. The relationship has helped build the school with a solid foundation but with movement to continue growing. Although the Principal will be leaving at the end of June, the institutional knowledge held by the Head of School, numerous teachers and board members will allow the school to transition with a new Principal. Ms. Merrill has put solid systems in place that will continue. We are building our team to help better support special education and middle school. We are targeting more behavior support, counseling and a more diverse staff to support the varying needs of students who are identified with a learning, behavioral or emotional disability. Overall the school is running smoothly and the administration feels there is ample educational and arts staff, but that we need more support staff.

We always follow applicable state laws regarding charter schools. Whether through hiring practices, special education, and discrimination practices, we follow the law.

Student performances and art exhibits continue to be well attended by families and community members. Student art is displayed throughout the community in venues like University of Maine at Augusta, Monkey Tree Gallery in Gardiner, Westbrook Performing Arts Center, Sam's Italian Restaurant, Slates Restaurant, Maine Arts Alliance at the State House, Cushnoc Brewing Window Display, Blanchard Gallery in Hallowell, Hallowell Art Walk, Main House in Hallowell, Gourmet Clay in numerous restaurants, Painted Film for the Maine International Film Festival and numerous other performances and venues. The school had 2 full theater productions this year performed at the University of Maine at Augusta and then several mini theater productions. Our dancers performed 6 times out in the community, most notably with Colby College students for their annual performance night. Our music department performed 7 times this year. Our art programs are thriving. Parents truly show up for these shows!

Maine Arts Academy has partnered with Colby College, Bates College, the University of Maine at Augusta, Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, Viles Arboretum, Capital Area Recreation, Kennebec Savings, Colonial Theater, the New Maine Veterans Home, the Boys and Girls Club in Augusta, Pineland Suzuki, Carvers Drivers Education, Boy Scouts, the Indigo Arts Alliance, Stain Glass Express, and other smaller partnerships through the 2024/2025 school year. Continuity engagement is strong.

The Maine Arts Academy board of directors is thriving! We have two new board members to add to the depth and breadth of a board that has experience and longevity. April Hughes from Healthy Community of the Capital Area joined our board this year. Rachel White, a science professor from the University of Maine at Orono also joined our board. Rachel was a previous teacher for our school in the first 3 years it was in existence. Both bring a younger energy to the board. We have another board member application pending from a younger candidate who is involved in the arts. The governing board has a



wealth of experience and knowledge with members like an attorney, retired music teacher, retired special education teacher, fundraiser, financial expert, and now someone from a non-profit who is an expert in drug and alcohol prevention and a professor who understands the school because she taught for us for three years. Linda Warner is our new board president and has worked hard to help board members understand the role of a board and how to oversee a school and non-profit.

Financially, we have taken on a monumental task by purchasing a 70,000 square foot building that needed to be transformed into a school. Over 20 rooms have been remodeled and enlarged, an auditorium space has been built, a dance studio has been built, classroom lighting has been updated and installed, outdoor lighting has been updated, safety glass on all our windows has been installed, HVAC systems have been updated and numerous other changes have been made to update the building. The value versus cost has been substantial.

Our budget is balanced and we keep a close eye on it due to the numerous projects we have had to spend money on. We constantly work on enrollment so that we increase our state subsidy. We also have received numerous grants this year. Kennebec Savings awarded us their Catalyst Grant for \$30,000, the state awarded us \$50,000 for biking and photography, the state awarded us \$30,000 for a tech grant to purchase 20 IMAC computers for our digital art program. We received \$4,000 for film and photography equipment from a foundation. We received \$10,000 for food service equipment and programming, and \$93,000 for safety. We were awarded \$28,000 for summer school.

We continue to look ahead with strategic planning goals that focus on maintaining the building far into the future. Maine Arts Academy will have a Capx account with \$250,000 in it by the end of this fiscal year. This account will be held by Kennebec Savings for the school to withdraw from if a new roof or other building projects need to be completed. The school is looking at replacing parts of the roof in the future and possibly installing solar panels. We have updated several classrooms with new lighting but would also like to update the hallways with new lighting. The success and care of our facility is a priority. The school owns 4 large buses and 4 mini buses. Maine Arts Academy plans on purchasing another large bus this summer (2025).

Insurance policies have stayed consistent and comprehensive in nature. We have a very comprehensive facilities policy, we have insurance that covers professional liability, we have insurance that covers all our vehicles as well. We offer Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield to all full-time employees. Maine Arts Academy contributes about \$3,000 toward each employees' deductible. We also offer vision, dental and life insurance. We offer health insurance to all our bus drivers with paid vacation. This is something other schools do not do.



Our food service program is going well. Our current food service director has worked for us for two years and is moving on. We have hired two new employees for the kitchen who have already begun to shadow our director. Our new director begins July 1. We are looking forward to some improvements in offering more variety in our meals for the 2025/2026 school year.

Evidence that the school's management and operations procedures and practices serve the mission, vision and needs of the students through the resources, professional development and support offered to teachers and students. Each teacher receives \$1000 towards purchasing learning materials for their classroom that help support students. We have increased this to \$2,000 for the arts teachers next year for even more support to meet our mission and vision. MeAA offers to pay for 1 college course per teacher each year. Teachers really take advantage of this and optimize their professional development.

Our budget is also evidence that we are meeting our mission. MeAA is managing a large building, has put aside \$250,000 for capital funds, and continues to expand and support academics and arts. We are adding AP classes on campus next year. We will be offering an AP math and history course. This will be in addition to the numerous college courses we offer on campus and online through the University of Maine at Augusta.

Students with 504 plans or IEPs are supported throughout their time at MeAA in order for them to access academics and arts without barriers. We offer a math tutoring period each day, an Academic Support period for all students and Learning Support period for IEP students so their learning goals are met.

We have continued our relationship with E-Therapy to offer Speech, Occupational, and Social Work services to our students. We have also continued our relationship with Belinda Sharpe. Belinda completes all our psychological assessments and evaluations. She has worked for us since the school opened in 2016. We also contract with Wendy Betts who helps keep us compliant with grant reporting and applications. Wendy has also worked with our school for several years. Both these relationships are meeting the needs of the school.

We are always assessing our procedures, methods and approaches to make sure they are working for us. We are not afraid to make changes and adjust as we continue to operate. We are not afraid to make mistakes and believe that the nature of a highly successful school is one that takes risks, has a solid foundation, always meets the mission and vision and can adjust from mistakes.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Maine Connections Academy

Board President: Billy Thompson

Executive Director: Walter Wallace



NARRATIVE

Maine Connections Academy, located in South Portland, is in its twelfth year of operation and serves approximately 500 students from across the state of Maine.

21.83% of MCA students have an IEP - slightly higher than the statewide average; while 51.59% of families are economically disadvantaged, significantly higher than the statewide average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Reading Growth and Proficiency
- Math Growth
- Subgroup achievement
- College Readiness
- Graduation
- Student Attendance
- School Culture and Climate

Areas of Focus:

- Math Proficiency

Student Achievement

Maine Connections Academy administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess the reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 7, Grade 8, and Grade 10 and consistently meets or exceeds framework expectations in reading. Students are approaching expectations in math for the second year in a row and should remain a focus for the school in the upcoming school year.

After having received a waiver from the Commission for the administration of the NWEA MAP assessment to measure student growth, MCA was required to administer the assessment to students in Grades 7 and 8 in the fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025. Results were outstanding, with students exceeding framework expectations.

Subgroup performance remains strong – with all groups meeting framework expectations in both reading and math.

The school uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and 86% of students have met the college readiness indicator in reading and 83% in math. Overall, subgroups are meeting expectations.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be a strength for the school. MCA enrolls students throughout the state of Maine and the statewide average for chronic absenteeism is 23.4%. MCA reports that only 9.69% of its student population were considered chronically absent this past school year - exceeding framework expectations.

4 and 5-year graduation rates have consistently been a strength for the school. MCA reports that 92.63% of seniors graduated in June (4-year cohort) and 93.08% graduated in the 5-year cohort - both exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education. Of particular note is the 6-year graduation rate of 90.57%, exceeding framework expectations. This is a remarkable improvement from 74.16% last year.

100% of MCA seniors successfully participate in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually and MCA consistently exceeds expectations for school climate and culture among all stakeholder groups.

Organizational Sustainability

MCA submits required documents to the Commission on time and accurately.

The MCA board holds regular meetings throughout the school year, but does not meet expectations for required board trainings, completing only 13% of the requirements this year.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Maine Connections Academy is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. The school is able to maintain an efficient administrative team because of administrative support from Pearson. MCA excels at grant management, staying up to date with application, performance reports, and invoicing. The school engaged the services of RHR Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence continues to be a strength with 92% of students persisting throughout the year and 96% submitting an intent to re-enroll for the upcoming school year.



PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) - Grade 7 (Meeting) - 69% of MCA students in grade 7 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 68% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Meeting) - 61% of MCA students in grade 8 are “at or above state expectations” compared to 60% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Meeting) - 63% of MCA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Meeting Between $\geq$-5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) - Grade 7 (Meeting) - 34% of MCA grade 7 students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 39% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Not Meeting) - 16% of MCA grade 8 students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 41% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Approaching) - 37% of MCA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching Between $\geq$-15% and <-5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting)	Meeting Between $\geq$-5% and <5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Approaching) - Female (Approaching)	Approaching



Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Between $\geq$ -15% and $<$ -5% of state average of schools "at or above state expectations"
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Exceeding - 57%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Meeting - 55%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Exceeding - 61%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Meeting) - Male (Exceeding)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Language Usage) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding)	Exceeding Exceeds 55%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Exceeding) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding)	Exceeding Exceeds 55%
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 92.63%</i>	Exceeding
5-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 93.08%</i>	Exceeding
6-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 90.57%</i>	Exceeding
Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - <i>85% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 239 or above in Reading; 83% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 226 or above in Math</i>	Meeting
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Students with a 504 Plan (Meeting) - Male (Approaching) - Female (Exceeding)	Meeting



Post-Secondary Activity - <i>100% of students successfully participated in at least one post-secondary activity</i>	Exceeding
FAFSA - <i>School provided support to 28.8% of families/students</i>	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	9.69% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results • School Climate - 99th Percentile • Safety - 99th Percentile • School Fit - 90th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are in the 50th percentile or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results • School Climate - 99th Percentile • Safety - 99th Percentile • Rigorous Expectations - 70th Percentile • Teacher/Student Relationships - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are in the 50th percentile or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results • School Climate - 90th Percentile • Leadership - 70th Percentile • Professional Learning - 99th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are in the 50th percentile or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results • School Climate - 99th Percentile • Leadership - 90th Percentile • Professional Learning - 99th Percentile • Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are in the 50th percentile or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	9 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	0 Agendas/0 Minutes



Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>100% on time; 100% accurate</i>	Exceeding
Board Training - <i>8 requirements; 1 completed (13%)</i>	Not Meeting
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>99 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Low Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	Low Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	Low Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting

**Based on FY25 QTR4 financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - <i>469 of 510 students (92%)</i>	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - <i>365 of 380 students (96%)</i>	Exceeding

School Customization

Participation in extracurricular activities	Meeting - 83%
---	---------------

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Maine Connections Academy (MCA) is Maine's first full time, virtual public charter school offering a rigorous academic program to students in grades 7-12. MCA operates under the authorization of the Maine Department of Education and Maine Charter School Commission.



MCA was founded during the 2014-15 school year and graduated its eleventh class in June 2025. The school has an enrollment of 500 students; thirty three percent middle school, grades 7-8 and sixty seven percent high school, grades 9-12.

From Kittery to Fort Kent, our school community spans statewide with approximately 20% of students residing in the southern regions and the greater Portland area. Our students come from urban, suburban, and rural communities with a variety of unique talents, strengths, and needs.

Sixty-five percent of MCA educators have a master's degree or higher (self-reported). MCA Board, Leadership, students, parents, staff, and teachers work collaboratively to ensure that all students experience a positive, caring, and personalized learning environment through which they can maximize their potential and meet the highest performance standards.

MCA meets the goals of the Maine Association for Charter Schools:

- *Innovative new public schools*
- *Autonomy for Accountability*
- *Free to all students – no tuition*
- *Open to all students*
- *A voluntary option for students, parents, and teachers*
- *Accountable for students learning*

Are We An Academic Success?

Mission

The mission of MCA is to maximize learner-centered instruction and effectively leverage 21st century education resources to provide a high-quality education to students in grades 7-12 throughout the state who need expanded educational options. MCA personalizes each student's education path to maximize his or her potential with a focus on meeting and exceeding the highest performance standards.

Vision

The vision of MCA is to reach students throughout Maine for whom a cutting-edge virtual approach provides the best pathway to school success. MCA implements a uniquely individualized learning program for each student in a way that most districts simply cannot offer in the traditional educational model. MCA combines the best in virtual education with real connections among students, families, teachers, and the community to promote academic and emotional success for every learner. Every single day, MCA lives its mission and vision by focusing on the students, the curriculum, and leveraging 21st century education resources.



By providing opportunities for success to students who otherwise may have been unsuccessful in their educational goals, MCA helps to increase the number of students in Maine who have a strong academic foundation and a love of learning. The Governing Board worked with the Maine Charter School Commission to establish appropriate academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations for a full-time virtual charter school that are clear, quantifiable, rigorous, and attainable. MCA uses these to establish expectations, guide practice, assess progress, and inform decision making.

Targeted Student Population

MCA is a “go to” school for those students who need a personalized, flexible education, even for a brief period, due to academic or non-academic needs, serving students with various needs, including:

- *Students who are in rural communities and lack access to public school options;*
- *Students who are far ahead of or far behind their peers in school, including students at risk of academic failure and those coping with social issues who may particularly benefit from personalized instruction;*
- *Students pursuing artistic or athletic careers or career development opportunities that require a flexible schedule;*
- *Students who are homebound due to illness, physical or social/emotional disability;*
- *Students with special learning needs; and*
- *Students with family livelihood responsibilities. These students attend tasks, e.g., harvesting and working in the fishing industry, while attending a school with a flexible education plan.*

MCA serves special populations through Individualized Educational Programs (IEP), Section 504 plans, and Gifted and Talented programs. Data is sourced from the 5/31/2025 Pearson Monthly School Report for Maine Connections Academy:

On 5/31/2025, 23% (n=109) of MCA students were enrolled with an IEP, 17% (n=81) enrolled under section 504, and 4% (n=19) participated in Gifted and Talented.

On 5/31/2025, 51.6% (n=245) of MCA students qualified for free or reduced meals.

How does the school’s program serve the school’s mission and vision?

MCA embodies multiple hallmarks of excellence:

- *A rigorous, proven curriculum that is aligned to the eight core content areas, the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS);*
- *Maine-certified teachers;*
- *Dedicated advisor for each student;*



- *An array of clubs and activities; AND*
- *An educational management system, Pearson Online Classroom, designed specifically for the virtual environment to provide accountability through comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting.*

MCA supports students throughout the state, including those living in rural geographies, by hosting field trips and family events in their areas. MCA serves students and provides services throughout the state.

Academic Program

MCA offers students in grades 7-12 throughout Maine the Connection Academy's comprehensive online virtual school program, which is a challenging, standards-based alternative to a brick-and-mortar school curriculum or a homeschool curriculum.

MCA provides a curriculum that aligns to the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards, and the NGSS. As Maine statute requires, MCA provides instruction in the eight content areas: Career and Education Development, English Language Arts, Health Education and Physical Education, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages.

MCA offers a wide variety of Connections courses that provide a solid foundation for whatever path a graduate may choose, be it attending college or starting a career. The Connections Academy comprehensive academic program combines the latest advancements in online instruction with the best curriculum tools.

The Connections Academy courses also develop skills in the important "four Cs" of 21st century learning:

- *Critical thinking and problem solving*
- *Communication*
- *Creativity and innovation*
- *Collaboration*

MCA offers students anywhere in the state hundreds of courses, dozens of clubs and activities, and access to resources that will help prepare them for the global economy they will be living and working in as adults. The personalized approach at MCA helps Maine students develop critical skills, including independent thinking, problem solving, and collaborating with people in their community and potentially across the globe.



Middle School

The program of instruction for students in grades 7 and 8 is individualized, personalized, and delivered in a non-traditional environment to give students the best pathways to success. The high-quality proprietary curriculum features age-appropriate and visually appealing formats that present students with lesson objectives, essential questions, overview of content, engaging instructional content, application and practice activities, review, and a check for understanding. Course design elements include age-appropriate photographs, videos, graphics, graphic organizers, and vivid electronic texts. Distinctions in design for grades 7 and 8 include more text on the screen, photographs, and graphics targeting an older audience.

MCA teachers host LiveLesson sessions (synchronous learning sessions) and provide recordings (asynchronous learning sessions) for students who have schedule conflicts. Teachers also provide synchronous direct instruction (individuals or small group) that is teacher-initiated or in response to student-initiated questions. Synchronous contacts are also initiated by MCA teachers to gauge student mastery through curriculum-based assessments (CBAs).

In grades 7 and 8, students sharpen their language arts, math, and critical thinking skills through a blend of online and offline work. They also deepen their understanding of history and science. Through exciting electives, students learn new skills, find art in everyday life, and explore modern technologies. Students are provided online and offline materials to encourage real world interaction. They can also join clubs that enrich them in innovative ways, like joining the e-sports team, the cooking club, and publishing art. Gifted students can even start earning high school credits early.

High School

The online high school program is fine-tuned to launch each student into a successful future. MCA is committed to helping all students prepare for bright futures after high school. Today, students need a broad education and 21st century skills to ensure successful long-term careers.

MCA provides a balanced, challenging high school experience focused on students pursuing paths that lead to success, whether via college or immediate career choice. MCA provides Credit Recovery in addition to Dual Credit Offerings and Early College enrollment through the University of Maine system and the Maine Community College system. Students may also elect to participate in a local Career and Technical Education program. Their personalized path is monitored along the way by the student, parents/guardians, teachers, and their school counselor. MCA provides comprehensive programs, often with multiple levels of academic coursework: Foundations, Standard, Honors, and Advanced Placement. While all levels are designed to meet state standards and provide students with a rigorous



curriculum, the levels enable differentiation based on student needs and college and career goals. Students will work with their school counselor to determine appropriate course level placement.

The high school program includes substantial teacher-directed instruction through synchronous and asynchronous e-learning tools. The high school curriculum integrates digital and/or print versions of textbooks from major publishers with enhanced multimedia, interactive materials and resources, discussions, and communication/conferencing tools. In addition, students will have offline assignments, projects, novels, and practice work.

Career Technical Education Courses

Fortunately, students no longer need to choose between the academic courses needed for college and a vocational or technical training program. The Career Technical Education (CTE) courses offered by Connections Academy school allow students to combine both college preparation and real-world workforce skills development into one customized education program. CTE courses encourage students to explore and prepare for careers in finance, marketing, psychology, criminal justice and more.

List of CTE Courses available at MCA, 24-25:

<i>Access - Office Fundamentals Series Accounting</i> <i>Allied Health Assistant</i> <i>Business Communications</i> <i>Business Information Management</i> <i>Business Law</i> <i>Business Ownership</i> <i>Computer Science</i> <i>Dental Assistant</i> <i>Digital Media Fundamentals</i> <i>Digital Media Web Design</i> <i>Early Childhood Education</i> <i>Entrepreneurship</i> <i>Health Science Foundations</i> <i>Health Science Theory</i> <i>Human Resource Management</i> <i>Introduction to Networking</i>	<i>Introduction to Programming</i> <i>Legal Admin Specialist</i> <i>Management</i> <i>Marketing Foundations</i> <i>Marketing</i> <i>Medical Assistant</i> <i>Medical Office Administration</i> <i>Medical Terminology</i> <i>Network Security Fundamentals</i> <i>Office Administration</i> <i>Principles of Business, Marketing and Finance</i> <i>Principles of Information Technology</i> <i>Programming</i> <i>Speech and Debate</i> <i>Sports Management</i> <i>Web Development</i> <i>Word - Office Fundamentals Series</i>
--	---

Are our students succeeding academically? What do test scores say about the school's academic success?



College acceptances and state test results in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science for grades 7 through 12 can be used to describe MCAs academic success. Achievement outcomes include the percent scoring proficient or advanced and year-over-year comparisons from initial school year performance until this year's publication of scores.

English Language (ELA) Performance

For the 2024-2025 school year, 69% of MCA 7th grade students, 61.5% of 8th grade students, and 63% of high school students scored proficient or above on the ELA state assessments – each grade level slightly outperforming the state average.

Math Performance

MCAs 7th grade students had a 34% proficiency rate. In 8th grade, 16.7% of students met proficiency. High school students performed at 37.2%. These rates were below state averages.

Science Performance

For the 2024-2025 school year, MCAs middle school students achieved a 100% first semester course pass rate in science both 7th and 8th graders. High school science pass rates also remained strong: 96.49% for 9th grade, 95.16% for 10th grade, 92.21% for 11th grade, and 91.04% for 12th grade.

College Acceptances

The Figure below lists colleges where students who graduated from MCA in SY24-25 were accepted. Since Maine provides free community college tuition, MCA students opt to begin college at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year university.

MCA 24-25 College Acceptances	
Beal College	Northern Maine Community College
Boston College	Point Park University
Central Maine Community College	Southern Maine Community College
Dean College	Trinity Laban Conservatory
Eastern Maine Community College	University of Rhode Island
Franciscan University	University of Maine, Augusta
Husson College	University of Maine, Farmington



<i>Keene State College</i>	<i>University of Maine, Orono</i>
<i>Kennebec Valley Community College</i>	<i>University of Maine, Presque Isle</i>
<i>Marymount Manhattan College</i>	<i>University of Southern Maine</i>
<i>Montclair State University</i>	<i>Washington County Community College</i>

How are our students doing in comparison to other students?

MCA students continue to perform competitively when compared to national norms on the NWEA MAP assessment. For the 2024-2025 school year, 43% of 7th grade and 47% of 8th grade students met their projected growth targets in Reading – within the schools target range of 45-55%. In Language Usage, 58% of 7th graders and 47% of 8th graders met their projected RIT growth, showing strong performance in that domain. Math results were especially notable, with 59% of 7th grade students and 62% of 8th grade students meeting their projected RIT growth goals – surpassing the school’s targeted growth range.

Special Student Populations

MCA is dedicated to serving special student populations. As such, MCA provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, including identifying, evaluating, planning educational programs, and implementing placements in accordance with IDEA.

MCA also supports the special education student population in accordance with the Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER). MCA has an open enrollment policy: any eligible public-school student in Maine can attend. The school does not discriminate in its pupil admissions policies or practices based on geography, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a student with a disability, test scores, disabilities, etc. As a public school, MCA will, through its policies and procedures, comply with all applicable requirements of IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. and implementing regulations, including Section 300.209 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504).

MCA serves the full range of needs of students with disabilities, including but not limited to:

- Consultative support for the general education teachers to provide modifications and accommodations to the general education curriculum;*
- Direct Special Education support may be provided via the telephone, Internet, LiveLesson sessions, as well as in person depending on the needs of the student;*



- *Direct related service support (for example: speech-language, occupational, or physical therapy, psychological counseling, among others) provided face-to-face, via computer, in homes, community sites, and therapist offices;*
- *Ongoing progress monitoring for every student: including frequent and thorough review of student performance, attendance or non-attendance, and participation data as reported to the student, parent and teacher through their respective home pages;*
- *Carefully logging every conversation (phone, WebMail message, LiveLesson session student attendance or non-attendance) and consultation with the student and/or parent as well as general education teachers; and*
- *Specific tracking and reporting for providers of direct/related services, with close scrutiny by the special education staff of any missed appointments or incomplete services.*

In addition, MCA serves the full range of needs of gifted students, including but not limited to:

- *A full suite of courses designed for gifted students, including gifted courses in Math, Science and Language Arts for students in grades 7-8 and 13 Advanced Placement® courses for gifted high school students;*
- *Proactive identification of giftedness and a customized placement process that provides gifted students with coursework and programming attuned to their abilities;*
- *Consultative support for teachers on modifications for gifted students and ongoing support in implementing gifted education practices across all subjects;*
- *Progress monitoring and detailed conversation logs that track gifted student progress and ensure alignment between challenge and ability.*

MCA provides English Learner students with the following supports:

- *We administer a Language Use Survey to every student who enrolls at MCA.*
- *Based on the responses on the Language Use Survey, students who are potentially eligible for English language services will have their records reviewed for indication of English Learner services at their previous school. Students who qualify for screening will be administered the WIDA Screener® diagnostic assessment upon enrollment within thirty days of the first day of school or within two weeks of enrollment thereafter.*
- *Parents will be notified of the diagnostic screening results (in a language they understand).*
- *Students who qualify for English Learner services receive ongoing English language support services as well as structured support in their general education classrooms.*
- *All English Learners will participate in the annual ACCESS 2.0® English Learner assessment within the designated time frame for Maine.*
- *Students who meet the state-required exit criteria will be moved to monitor status under Maine guidelines.*



- *Students who do not meet the state-required exit criteria will remain in the English Learner program until they meet the state-required exit criteria.*

Are we meeting the needs of all our students?

Yes. MCAs instructional methods, educational philosophy, and program include some unique elements that are all inclusive to the needs of every learner. MCA contracts for specific educational and operational support always with the oversight and approval of the Governing Board. MCA maintains high compliance with IEP completion and reporting. Co-teaching is routinely used, which includes our special education teacher's collaboration on common planning, lesson building, instruction and one-on-one support. This model has allowed all students attending MCA to remain in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Assessment

MCA provides assessments that are aligned to the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). MCA also accommodates students with disabilities and provides alternate assessments in accordance with state law.

MCA uses the following tools to evaluate the progress of students:

- **Placement Tests:** *During enrollment in the program, each new student will take part in a placement process that includes review of previous school records and assessment results, review with parents, and use of placement tests as needed to help evaluate the appropriate set of courses for the student. Connections' Academic Placement Advisors and the school's Counselors will then consult with the principal to determine a grade-level and/or course placement in consultation with parents/guardians.*
- **Formative Assessments:** *MCA utilizes NWEA MAP as a formative assessment; this is selected for their appropriateness in grades 7-11. NWEA reading, language, and math assessments provide essential diagnostic information for developing the Personalized Learning Plan and planning instruction. It provides an early predictor of performance on mandated tests and reports key accountability data on progress throughout the academic year. Students are assessed on pre-, mid-, and post-testing throughout the school year. Additionally, identified students are assessed using IXL diagnostic tools. These also allow us to identify students that may need additional support.*
- **Ongoing Informal Assessments:** *Students engage in formative assessments through whole group LiveLesson and small group intervention time. The assessments tap into all levels of student learning such as scored daily assignments, daily checks for understanding which require students to apply and integrate new skills in a thoughtful manner, and regular online quizzes and tests to measure understanding of newly presented material.*



- **Unit Assessments and Online Portfolio Assignments:** *Throughout each local unit of study, students must complete a series of online assessments.* Assessments include written compositions, science lab reports, short-answer questions, essays, book responses, and a variety of work samples. These assessments require direct teacher evaluation. Other assessments include quizzes and unit tests. While the quizzes are brief and frequent, the more comprehensive unit tests occur at the end of an entire unit. Online assessments provide students and families with immediate objective feedback while offline assessments provide valuable reflection, feedback, and expertise from credentialed teachers. Student progress reports and grades include a combination of quizzes, tests, work samples, and teacher feedback.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessments:** *MCA uses curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) as a quick and effective way to gather additional information on students' understanding of concepts through telephone conversation or one on one video meetings through the secure classroom platform. Curriculum-based assessments pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts and authenticate student learning of concepts previously completed.*

Are we implementing our academic program as we envisioned?

Yes. MCA continues to support the framework and the core priority areas as follows:

- **Effective, Learner-Centered Instruction** - *MCA students work with rigorous curriculum supporting the Maine Learning Results and aligned to the Common Core State Standards and NGSS. Instruction, both synchronous (direct teacher-led) and asynchronous (not teacher-led), is focused on the individual student and is based on assessment data, including frequent formative assessments and directed curriculum-based assessments. Students, parents, and teachers are provided data that is accurate and timely, allowing student growth to be tracked over time.*
- **Great Teachers and Leaders** - *Teachers participate in a performance evaluation system aligned to teaching standards, school goals, and student performance. Through ongoing teacher training and professional development, participation in professional learning communities, peer review, and varied career ladder opportunities, teachers are effective and consistently focused on student learning and continuous improvement. Instructional leaders utilize data provided through Connections' proprietary educational management system Pearson Online Classroom, and the state accountability system to drive professional development both for individual teachers and the school.*
- **Multiple Pathways for Learner Achievement** - *Students work individually with their teachers on their Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), maximizing their potential by ensuring that academic strengths are challenged and that academic weaknesses are diagnosed and addressed. Instruction is customized to best fit students' individual needs. Teachers tap into a*



wide array of resources and modify lessons as needed for each student. With the flexibility of virtual schooling, students can truly learn “anytime, anywhere!”

- ***Comprehensive School and Community Supports*** - Virtual schools like MCA open a vast range of possibilities and options for the delivery of the full continuum of special education and related services such as speech-language, occupational, or physical therapy; psychological counseling; and other services to eligible students. Additionally, MCA employs a Social Worker to support students and families with non-academic support. With parent involvement as a central element of MCA, the whole family may get involved in health programs, community programs, and field trips. Through a comprehensive counseling program focused on college and career readiness, students are provided career and workforce resources, course and club options, and work-study internship opportunities.
- ***Coordinated and Effective State Support*** - MCA offers students throughout Maine, regardless of zip code, a high-quality school for students in grades 7-12 utilizing state-of-the-art technology tools. Virtual schools offer a unique opportunity to utilize data to drive instruction and performance. Accessible to key stakeholders, including parents and students, accountability is robust and transparent.
- ***Proficiency Based Learning*** - MCA incorporates Proficiency Based Learning through course alignment with standards, independent studies, and project-based options. Students can make up standards through a variety of alternative assignments and projects when needed.

An individualized and supported educational program facilitates the development of personal responsibility among students. MCA will continue to focus on molding motivated, competent, lifelong learners. We have implemented resources such as IXL to strengthen our RTI process which is crucial for us due to the students that enroll. Many of our students are either one or two grade levels behind in their academic knowledge when entering MCA. A strong RTI program is needed to ensure that the student remediates prior learning and proper tier placement occurs. By tracking the students with fidelity, we have been successful in breaking down and analyzing student data. We have also experienced the benefits that come from assisting with differentiated lesson planning. Our team continues to engage in meaningful collaboration regarding data reflection and attend various professional developments to strengthen our RTI/MTSS work.

Climate and Discipline

Climate

MCA provides a full-time school experience with a virtual learning community which connects students, teachers, and families through unique technology tools as well as face-to-face interactions. MCA is a whole-school experience for its students with academic, social, behavioral, emotional, and



college/career support. Students participate in clubs, activities, and electives to complete the full-school experience.

Students participate in enriching in-person community activities and field trips to round out the comprehensive learning experience. We hold school-wide virtual pep-rallies. Students can earn points at the school store through interaction with staff and others.

Additionally, MCA is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all its students and staff. The school conveys this commitment through its written policies in the School Handbook and Employee Handbook and through its collaboratively developed school culture. MCA complies with all laws and regulations related to the safety of students, including Maine 20-A MRS 1001. MCA staff are all trained in safety and response to students in crisis yearly.

MCA encourages the use of technology to promote students' learning. MCA provides a safe and supportive environment by keeping students safe from online predators and solicitors. An Internet Safety Course for students, parents, and Learning Coaches is provided by Connections Academy. It is an i-SAFE course that provides information about the various threats, challenges, and safety protocols needed to work and learn online. It contains valuable information about practicing safe behaviors online. This course is also required training for all school staff. The staff course is Online Safety: What Every Educator Needs to Know. MCA also has in place the following policies and procedures:

- *Anti-Harassment Policy;*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy;*
- *Emergency Resource Guide;*
- *Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities—Administrative Procedure;*
- *Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities—Policy;*
- *School Seclusion and Restraint Policy; and*
- *School Discipline Policy.*

Discipline

MCA has a defined discipline policy that is detailed in the student and staff handbooks. MCA has few discipline needs with the top need relating back to student engagement and interaction with courses; MCA added advisors for each student to ensure students have the support they need for this.

Is our school a safe and positive environment for staff, students, and families?

Yes. Per Title 20-A of the Maine revised statute, as a public school, MCA is committed to adhering to policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment for students and to prevent bullying. MCA provides a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all its students, and



conveys this commitment through its written policies and collaboratively-developed school culture. MCA educates administrators, teachers, families and students on bullying prevention strategies and techniques. Part of the training stresses the impact of bullying and why it is important for schools to develop and sustain bullying prevention strategies.

MCA encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community, and defines harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, or hazing toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, as “prohibited behaviors” that are not to be tolerated. The School Handbook explains that this prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, psychological abuse, and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether the target of the prohibited behavior are members of legally protected groups, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, age, or disability. MCA and the Governing Board do not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions that cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. MCA has had no substantiated reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Students and families are given opportunities to socialize and enhance learning with other families, staff and students through field trips, academic summits, and other school events. Students are placed in advisories and called regularly. MCA strives to support and communicate with students’ families to increase positive interactions and experiences.

In addition, MCA has strict policies in place to prevent truancy and plagiarism. MCA holds students to a high standard regarding academic honesty and strictly adheres to the consequences of the infringement of these guidelines. MCA has constructed protocols to combat concerns around truancy and chronic absenteeism.

Students’ attendance is monitored and addressed weekly through reports from the school principal. We have increased monitoring, oversight, and meetings to address our attendance concerns. MCA follows Maine state truancy laws. As there is a need for attendance to be continuously monitored and addressed, MCA utilizes behavioral intervention to work with our students and families who may be experiencing barriers in attendance. Our MTSS coordinator and Special Education Attendance Lead use the attendance report to monitor attendance which allows for quick intervention.

What have we learned from parent and student surveys?

Parent Survey Results



Parents' results on the 24-25 Panorama survey are overwhelmingly positive, with sustained positive ratings in School Safety (95%) and School Climate (83%). MCA's focus are is in School Fit, scoring at 72%, all above the national average.

Student Survey Results

Students rated the school climate as favorable with 78%, +6%, with a sub-category rating in the school having positive energy, 88%, +4%. 88%, +1% of students say teachers are excited to be teaching classes. Students identified increasing engagement in classroom lessons as an area for focus, 64% favorable rating for lesson motivation.

Staff Survey Results

MCA staff via the 24-25 Panorama Survey rated School Leadership effectiveness at 89% favorable. MCAs area of focus continues to be on delivering valuable professional development sessions.

Teacher Survey Results

MCA teachers continue to rate School Climate, Professional Learning and Feedback and Coaching in the top quartile. While the majority of teachers feel positive about the School Culture, there are some that would like more input into decision-making, opening up opportunities for committee work.

Are We an Organizational Success?

Calendar and Schedule

MCA follows a traditional school year calendar that includes 180 school days (currently exceeding Maine requirements) during which instruction by school staff. The Governing Board approves the school calendar annually, and the calendar provides 180 days of instruction for students with 193 workdays for teachers (significantly more than other schools in Maine). The school calendar may be extended to allow families more flexibility in completing the year's work, or to provide extra learning time for students who are at risk (generally not by more than two weeks).

Student Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention

Student recruitment and enrollment policies are balanced with the mutual goals of ensuring that families are aware of their choices with the competing demand of being fiscally conservative. Enrollment begins in February for the school year starting in August, with reasonable public notice given at least 30 days before the enrollment application deadline and according to all Maine rules and regulations. Enrolled students can begin re-enrollment in January.



MCA actively recruits families that represent the full cultural, demographic and socioeconomic range of Maine. The next Figure illustrates the student demographics of MCA as compared to the averages throughout Maine.

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>MCA</i>	<i>State of Maine</i>
<i>White</i>	<i>88.49%</i>	<i>84.83%</i>
<i>Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>1.98%</i>	<i>3.79%</i>
<i>Multiple Races</i>	<i>5.16%</i>	<i>3.83%</i>
<i>Black/African American</i>	<i>2.98%</i>	<i>5.28%</i>
<i>Asian</i>	<i>0.4%</i>	<i>1.37%</i>
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	<i>0.79%</i>	<i>0.79%</i>

For student outreach, MCA uses creative messaging, and tactics tailored to prospective families, highlighting virtual school offerings that benefit families and students. Key activities include:

- **Paid search campaigns on Google and Bing** for people searching online schools and related terms.
 - Ads point families to landing pages where they fill out a form to request information and become a lead or apply.
 - Leads/applicants receive a series of follow-up nurture communications (via email and SMS text) aimed at converting to enrollments.
- **Paid Advertising** on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and a range of targeted websites, streaming video, and audio platforms.
- **Earned Media** through local and national PR outreach to drive awareness via news outlets and highlight student stories and other school news.
- **Virtual Events**, which include national events hosted by Pearson Virtual Schools (PVS), and monthly MCA-specific information sessions to answer questions, engage, and convert prospective families.
- **Owned Social and the website**, are “always on” and not only help with awareness and consideration among prospective families but are key channels for building engagement and advocacy among enrolled families.



Staffing and Human Resources

In January of 2025 the school's Leadership Team and the Governing Board, with support from several Pearson Virtual Schools teams such as Human Resources, Partner School Success Operations Team, and School Financial Services, collaborated with MCA to build a budget to frame the upcoming school year. During this process, key factors were reviewed including the structure of the school and anticipated growth. School Leaders set staffing ratios (number of staff for a position based on the number of students enrolled) for each position at the school, so staffing is tied closely to student enrollment.

Because there are many stages of student enrollment, and this is tracked and analyzed by a team of marketing, finance, human resources, and school admin professionals all year long, this team meets weekly throughout the year to assess both the needs based on the data (student enrollment) and the staffing needs raised by the school leader to review and approve positions. The process accounts for the ever-changing needs of the school and how students can best be supported in alignment with the school's budget.

The staffing needs are aligned with the mission and vision of the school supporting the breadth and depth of the virtual school environment. Support through lesson plans, curriculum, educational resources staff, professional development and technology support gives the school staff and leadership the opportunity to focus on each student's personalized learning experience.

The school places significant importance on the quality of teachers and administration. The professional development for teachers and staff is integrated and aligned with the student curriculum, student pedagogy, student information system, data, evaluation systems, and other services. There are unique skill sets, dispositions, and training needed to be an effective teacher in a virtual school environment. The school aims to attract high-quality teachers, knowledgeable in their content areas. The school identifies, trains, monitors, and supports teachers under the supervision and guidance of the Governing Board, as well as supports the performance evaluation process in a virtual school environment.

What does our staff turnover tell us about how well we are meeting the needs of our staff?

Using the feedback and data collected from staff engagement surveys as the driving force behind decisions made in relation to the needs of staff, MCA has demonstrated the ability to retain its teachers. The number of voluntary separations for the school year 2024-2025 was much lower when compared to the prior school year. The ability to maintain a stable staff provides students with continuous, uninterrupted support. This year's data shows turnover to be just 2 voluntary separations.



Management and Operations

The operating structure is like a traditional educational environment. Walter Wallace, Executive Director, provides comprehensive leadership and oversight of school operations, including supervision of staff, state compliance and reporting, budget management, grant administration, and performance monitoring. The position also manages relationship with the Board and Charter Commission, coordinates educational programs, and ensures alignment with the school's mission through strategic planning, community engagement, and policy development.

Lauren Thompson, Principal, provides leadership in staff supervision, enrollment management, and school operations, including oversight of High school staff, the hiring process, professional development planning, and student support systems. It also involves managing school-wide timelines, data tracking, attendance processes, internal and external communications, and ensuring alignment with school policies, budget guidelines, and overall school improvement goals.

Does our current staffing meet the needs of our program?

Yes. The school is fully staffed with the appropriate number of staff based on the number of enrolled students and the targets established by the school and the Governing Board. In the 24-25 SY, MCA added a Data and Assessment Coordinator to help with the increased requirements, and a Special Education Attendance Lead to assist with student engagement. Social work hours were increased during the summer for consistency of service.

Are we following applicable state law regarding hiring of staff?

Yes. All teachers are fully certified in Maine to teach the content and grade levels in which they are assigned.

Parent and Community Involvement

Real connections are an important component at MCA so students can participate regularly in both face-to-face and virtual community activities. In-person activities include regular field trips and outings facilitated by MCA staff. Teachers often go out into the community for field trips, state assessments, information sessions and other school events.

Field trips are also focused on college and career readiness for the secondary students; field trips to local universities and colleges are scheduled as well as trips to explore local businesses and attend college and career fairs.

MCA provides school-based clubs that meet both face-to-face and virtually. In addition, through Connections Academy, students are offered access to more than 30 academic clubs and activities



through which they can explore interests beyond the classroom, develop leadership skills, and make friends within their school and with students from other Connections Academy schools.

How are we ensuring meaningful family involvement in their child's education and in our school?

Family involvement is key to MCAs program. Families are encouraged to participate in back-to-school, on-going, and end-of-the-year events and activities such as picnics, academic summits, and educational field trips offered throughout the year. These activities and events are organized through stipend engagement positions.

In addition to their own personal login and password to Pearson Online Classroom and access to up-to-the-minute data on their child's education, parents have multiple opportunities to shape the overall school experience. They may be selected to serve as parent members of the Governing Board. Parents are also asked for input through face-to-face meetings with school staff and are always welcome to visit the local office to connect with staff.

The Governing Board is interested in providing service-learning opportunities as described previously. National Honor Society coordinates community service projects, such as raising money via art raffles to be donated to charities such as Ronald McDonald House and Youth Arts Access Fund.

Parents, community members, and teachers all have multiple opportunities to collaborate on face-to-face learning activities with students during field trips and other outings. Teachers attending field trips typically work with location staff and parents to provide structured learning activities on site. The principal and faculty initiate the first face-to-face opportunities within the first two months of the start of school.

Are we a Governance Success?

As set forth in the Bylaws, the Governing Board's mission is to provide top-quality personalized education for students and families who seek an alternative to the conventional classroom. The Governing Board maintains a commitment to excellence in curriculum, instruction, accountability, and communication for virtual schools and works with the Maine Charter School Commission and in accordance with its charter terms.

Governing Body

The Governing Board is incorporated as an independent, public, non-profit corporation and is not a subsidiary of another entity, or in any way connected with, or under the control of another entity. The Governing Board is an effective steward of public money and provides independent governance of the school's administrators.



The Governing Board members are parents, educators, and business and community leaders who are committed to providing an innovative virtual charter school for students in Maine. Governing Board members have unique skills and expertise in virtual education, technology, internal controls, and financial analysis. These qualifications will help ensure the success of the school and the effective representation of key stakeholders.

The roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board include, but are not limited to, the following:

● <i>Protect the legal interests of the charter school and adhere to all applicable laws,</i>	● <i>Comply with state and federal reporting requirements,</i>
● <i>Approve the school budget,</i>	● <i>Practice strategic planning,</i>
● <i>Practice financial management strategies,</i>	● <i>Ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively,</i>
● <i>Act as fiduciary of the school,</i>	● <i>Assess the organization's performance including monitoring achievement of accountability framework,</i>
● <i>Establish a framework for the budget,</i>	● <i>Attend mandatory training annually that is relevant to effective leadership,</i>
● <i>Authorize major expenditures, substantial program changes, etc.,</i>	● <i>Act as tribunal for disciplinary hearings,</i>
● <i>Elect the officers of the corporation and determine their terms,</i>	● <i>Approve real estate transactions,</i>
● <i>Ensure that the charter is achieving its vision and mission,</i>	● <i>Negotiate and enter a charter with Maine Charter School Commission,</i>
● <i>Oversee services and activities of the virtual education service provider,</i>	● <i>Exercise sound legal and ethical practices and policies,</i>
● <i>Set Governing Board policy,</i>	● <i>Manage liabilities wisely,</i>
● <i>Provide academic program approval,</i>	● <i>Advocate good external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students,</i>
● <i>Evaluate and monitor the activities and success of the school leader and other members of the school leadership team,</i>	● <i>Hire contractors, negotiate service agreements, and hold contractors accountable for performance under such</i>



	<i>agreements, and</i>
• <i>Govern the operations of the school but leave daily operations to the school leader,</i>	• <i>Review and renew the contract with the virtual education service provider.</i>

Governing Board Composition

William Thompson, Governing Board President/Secretary

Billy is currently the Chief of Staff to the House Minority Office. Prior to joining the House Minority Office, he served as the Senior Education Policy Advisor to Governor LePage. Billy graduated from Colby College with an AB in Philosophy and Governing and holds a MA in Political Science from George Mason University.

Previously he served on the DC staff of Senator Collins and held a Presidential Appointment at the Department of Homeland Security as Assistant Director of Legislative Affairs for DHS Intelligence. He also worked in the Maine Senate as Director of Communications, the Maine House as the Director of Policy and as the Director of Policy for the Speaker of the Maine House.

He is a member of the Brunswick School Board and served two terms as chairman. He has been married to his wife, Michelle, for 12 years and they have a seven-year-old daughter, Reagan, twin three-year-old sons, Billy and Bales, three dogs, two cats and a fish named Peter.

Jennifer Cummings, Governing Board Treasurer

As Director of Business at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), Jennifer Cummings oversees a strong and experienced lending team that works with Maine lenders and businesses to help them get to "yes". FAME has a unique role in Maine, tasked with taking on greater risk than traditional lenders for the benefit of the state. FAME does this primarily by offering Maine lenders commercial loan insurance and providing direct loans to Maine businesses through its FAME Direct Loan program, frequently facilitating deals that would not otherwise be possible.

At FAME success is measured by the number of jobs created and retained, as well as the amount of capital deployed: since 1983 when FAME opened its doors, over 100,000 jobs have been created or retained across all of Maine's major industries and over \$2 billion in loans and equity capital has been funneled into the Maine economy. Jenn has over 20 years of experience as a commercial finance professional, both as a commercial loan officer and workout officer. She joined FAME in 2013 as Senior Workout Officer and now serves as Director of Business. A Maine native, Jenn received her BS in International Business and Logistics from Maine Maritime Academy and earned her MBA from Thomas



College. When not at work, she enjoys spending time outside with her family, hiking and skiing. Jenn lives in Manchester with her two daughters, Grace (13) and Eleanor (7).

Jana Lapoint, Governing Board Member

Jana Lapoint joined Maine Connections Academy as a board member, continuing her long and successful career in education. She has a BD in history and an MS in business education, as well as more than a decade of experience teaching high school students. In 1995, Jana was appointed by former governor Angus King to the board of trustees of the Maine Community College System. She also served on the Maine State Charter Commission, with two of those years as chair, during which time she proudly signed the documents that established the Vocational College as a community college of Maine. From 2010-2021, Jana served as vice chair on the Maine State Board of Education. In addition, she acted as a trustee at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts, and Cheverus High School in Portland, Maine. Jana has four children, 13 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Connie Ronco, Governing Board Member

Connie Ronco is a part time faculty member in the College of Education/Human Development at the University of Maine. In her previous career she was the department chair of the Early Childhood and Education Programs at Eastern Maine Community College and a classroom teacher in public and private schools. She has also served as an adjunct faculty at the University of New England. She completed her education at University of Maine, earning a B.S. in Human Development, a M.S. in Education, and a CAGS in Educational Leadership. Connie is a dedicated educational professional in Maine, having served over 40 years in the field as a teacher, administrator, and institutional leader. She enjoys her role in mentoring and guiding pre-service educators as they prepare to become the future teachers for Maine students and beyond. As Team Leader for the Achieving the Dream Initiative at Eastern Maine Community College, Connie has been a champion for student success and retention and has been instrumental in bringing many best practices, such as learning communities, a student success center, math pathways and college success courses to support first generation and at-risk students to succeed in college. Connie is an advocate for students and believes that families should have choice for the best educational experiences for their children. Connie lives in Winterport with her husband and enjoys spending time with her family and grandchildren.

Nicki Peluso, Governing Board Member

Nicole Peluso has three students enrolled in 7th grade at MCA. She is a strong supporter of and greatly appreciates having school choice for her family and other Maine families. She has dedicated the last 15 years to raising her children and serves as their primary caregiver and household manager, committed to fostering a positive and supportive home environment for her family. Nicole has a strong



volunteer background at schools her children have attended, and she appreciates the opportunity to the MCA school community by serving on the MCA board.

Does our governing board have the capacity to effectively lead and manage the school?

Yes. Each of the five Governing Board members bring unique skills and expertise to support the school and make decisions regarding budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures. All Governing Board members have community ties across the state. There is a wide range of expertise on the Governing Board demonstrating the capacity for successful and continued operations.

Are our practices open and transparent to the community?

Yes. The Governing Board complies with Maine's open meeting laws by ensuring that all meeting days and times are appropriately posted at the school site, on the school's website, and published in all applicable ways for public information. Parents and the public are welcome to attend and may address the Governing Board during the public comment period.

The Governing Board adopted a regular monthly schedule. Agendas and meeting minutes are available on the MCA website. The public, included but not limited to, key stakeholders such as parents, staff, and interested members of the public, are notified through postings at the school site and online, and are encouraged to attend, in person or via telephone.

Are we following effective board stewardship?

Yes. The Governing Board understands the importance of being an independent functioning entity and the commitment by each Governing Board Member to ensure the legal, fiduciary, and oversight authority for MCA with autonomy over key decisions, as referenced in MRS 20-A §2401, sections, 6,9A. During the initial charter, the Governing Board has been active in Board training and development, including engaging with a third-party facilitator to undergo strategic planning and then formally adopting a strategic plan. The Governing Board has contracted with Connections; however, the Governing Board is legally and operationally independent from Connections. Connections is responsible for reporting to the Governing Board and answerable to the Governing Board. Furthermore, the Governing Board conducts an annual review of Connections.

Are We a Financial Success?

Budget

The school's mission is to maximize learner-centered instruction and effectively leverage 21st century education resources to provide a high-quality education to students in grades 7-12 throughout the state who need expanded educational options, especially those in rural and remote communities who



are unlikely to have access to a brick-and-mortar charter school. To achieve its mission, the school must remain fiscally sound. To do so, the Governing Board develops an annual budget and analyzes cash flow needs carefully.

Is the operating budget balanced?

Annually, the Governing Board prepares and approves a balanced Fiscal Budget. The Budget is analyzed and is reviewed by the Governing Board at its regularly scheduled meetings. Additionally, the school has a CFO who ensures funds are expended in alignment with the approved Budget. Since the school's inception, it has ended each school year with a balanced budget.

Financial Management

The Governing Board is responsible for the completion and results of all accounting reports as required by law, regulation, or the charter, including a report of budgeted and actual expenses. The Governing Board provides any information required by the Maine Department of Education, Maine Charter School Commission, or its auditors. On an annual basis and prior to any deadline specified in the charter, MCA presents a balanced budget (i.e., not resulting in a cumulative net asset deficit) for the following fiscal year to the Maine Department of Education, Maine Charter School Commission, and its auditors.

MCA provides the Maine Department of Education, Maine Charter School Commission, and its auditors with any requested information regarding staff, students, and finances including but not limited to information needed to carry out the purpose of the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act, Title 20-A, Chapter 606-B. The information is provided according to the time schedule and in the form required by the Maine Department of Education, Maine Charter School Commission, or its auditors.

MCA follows a financial and accounting plan that is compliant with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and provides an accurate accounting of all its finances, ensures sufficient information for audit purposes, and provides data in the format needed for accurate and timely reporting to the Maine Department of Education, Maine Charter School Commission, or its auditors.

MCA has also established policies and procedures and institutes rigorous internal financial controls.

In addition, MCA incorporates the position of a CFO (third party consultant) into the organization of the school, Amy Trunnell, CPA. Ms. Trunnell has more than 35 years of experience in her field and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration.

What role does fundraising play in the school's fiscal operation?



MCA does not currently engage in fundraising.

Facilities

MCA leases permanent space for administrative and teaching staff in South Portland, ME which is the main teaching/learning center where administrative and some teaching staff work. The teaching/learning center includes a conference room for use in IEP conferences and other special education-related activities.

The teaching/learning center can also serve as a place to host parent teacher conferences and staff groups. MCA students participate in state proficiency tests depending upon grade level. The school sets up in-person, proctored locations for state testing throughout the state based on the geographic location of the student population.

Transportation

As MCA is an online, virtual school serving students throughout Maine, it does not provide routine transportation. Students do not require transportation services for regular school activities which occur primarily in their homes and immediate vicinity. The only mandatory school events that may require students to report somewhere other than their home or immediate neighborhood are: a) special orientation sessions, and b) state standardized tests, which students take at proctored locations. MCA provides transportation for required activities and state testing and when a student does not have transportation necessary to go to the proctored location.

Insurance

MCA has commercial general liability, automobile liability and workers' compensation insurance and can provide documentation upon request.

Food Service

Since MCA serves students statewide who learn in their homes, the school does not offer a food service program. Parents are fully informed of this fact prior to their students' enrollment in the school so they may make the best school choice for their family.

For purposes of demographic documentation, however, MCA requests during the enrollment process that families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals – based on past eligibility for these services or current family income – identify themselves. The purpose of collecting this information is to ensure that the school is prepared to arrange supplemental educational resources available to students and the school based on incidence of poverty. Parents are fully informed that volunteering this information does not entitle their family to meal service. MCA staff refers families who qualify for free or



reduced-price meals to local social service agencies for food assistance upon request. If federally funded lunch program is changed to permit the distribution of direct assistance to families, MCA is prepared to seek funds to provide this service.

Education Service Providers (ESP)

Is the relationship with the ESP beneficial to the implementation of the school's program?

Yes. Pearson Virtual Schools, dba Connections Academy is a crucial partner in achieving the school's mission, with strong oversight by the Governing Board, to empower children with knowledge, skills, and character traits to be successful in their education through an engaging, personalized learning experience at the full-time virtual school. The Governing Board has chosen to contract with Connections Academy and as such, the school has benefited with quality academic materials for students, and national best practices expertise and guidance. Connections Academy has a proven record of success collaborating with public virtual schools and consistent strong ratings from parents. Additionally, third-party evaluations of MCA show positive reports of the relationship between MCA and Connections Academy.

Is the ESP meeting the needs of the school?

Yes. The Governing Board approves products and services that Connections Academy provides the school. The school annually reviews the various investments Connections is making in its products and services, including a review of the curriculum program, intervention programs, professional development program, and the software platform used to deliver these programs and services.

Is the ESP responsive to the needs of the school?

Yes. The Governing Board benefits from Pearson's Connections Academy's 22 years of experience as a high-quality virtual school provider. Connections leverages significant resources to the benefit of the school. This partnership creates a virtual school setting new standards of excellence in the virtual school arena and positively impacts student learning.

Annual Monitoring Report SY2024-25



November 2025

Maine Virtual Academy

Board President: Donna Pelletier

Head of School: Dr. Melinda Browne



NARRATIVE

Maine Virtual Academy, located in Augusta, is in its eleventh year of operation and serves 475 students from 182 cities and towns throughout Maine.

24.42% of MeVA students have an IEP and 48.63% of families are economically disadvantaged - both higher than the statewide average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

Strengths:

- Academic Growth (Math and Reading, including subgroups)
- Graduation Rates
- College Readiness
- Graduation
- Student Attendance
- School Culture and Climate
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly

Areas of Focus:

- Reading and Math Proficiency

Student Achievement

Maine Virtual Academy administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 7, Grade 8, and Grade 10. This state-required assessment is given two times per year – once in the fall and again in the spring and, although MeVA is a virtual school, students are required to take the assessment in person.

Results on the reading assessment did not meet framework expectations this year and administration attributes this to students having greater academic deficits when enrolling at the school. A large percentage of new students have IEPs and are oftentimes several grade levels behind when enrolling at MeVA. Additional help is available to students and the school “strongly encourages” summer programming. Reading growth; however, as measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment shows that MeVA students are meeting their projected growth, an improvement over last years’ results.



Math results have improved from a year ago, with MeVA students approaching framework expectations. Math growth remains strong, exceeding framework expectations for several years in a row.

Subgroup performance - particularly students with IEPs and those that are economically disadvantaged - remains strong.

The school uses the Accuplacer to measure college-readiness and continues to exceed framework expectations with over 90% of students meeting the college-readiness indicator in both math and reading. It is important to note that all subgroups, with the exception of students with IEPs, are exceeding framework expectations.

Chronic absenteeism continues to be a strength for the school; exceeding framework expectations year after year. The statewide average for chronic absenteeism is 23.4%; MeVA boasts a chronic absenteeism rate of 6.95%.

For the fourth year in a row, MeVAs 4-year graduation rate is 100%! 5 and 6-year graduation rates are also consistently strong - often 100%, consistently exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education.

100% of MeVA seniors successfully participate in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. Year after year, the results show that school climate and culture across all stakeholder groups is very strong.

Organizational Sustainability

MeVA consistently submits required documents to the Commission on time and accurately. The board is active - and growing - meeting regularly throughout the school year. The MeVA board uses results from the Panorama survey to set its goals for the upcoming school year and conducts a board self-evaluation annually. Board members completed all of their required board trainings - exceeding framework expectations.



The Commission requires the “timely posting of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes” and MeVA fulfills this obligation without fail.

Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Maine Virtual Academy is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. MeVA excels at grant management, staying up to date with application, performance reports, and invoicing. The school engaged the services of Wipfli, LLP and received a clean audit for FY24.

School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence remains strong. 93% of students persisted through SY2024-25, while 94% of students completed an intent to re-enroll form for next year.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
-----------	---------	-------------	-------------

Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA) - Grade 7 (Not Meeting) - 43% of MeVA 7th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 68% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 8 (Not Meeting) - 42% of MeVA 8th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 60% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Approaching) - 52% of MeVA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform	Not Meeting <-15% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math) Grade 7 (Approaching) - 26% of MeVA 7th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 39% statewide per the Acacia platform	Approaching



- Grade 8 (Not Meeting) - 13% of MeVA 8th grade students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 41% statewide per the Acacia platform - Grade 10 (Approaching) - 37% of MeVA high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform	Between $\geq$ -15% and $<$ -5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Not Meeting) - Female (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting)	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and $<$ -5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Male (Approaching) - Female (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)	Approaching Between $\geq$ -15% and $<$ -5% of state average of schools “at or above state expectations”
Growth	
NWEA MAP Assessment (Reading)	Meeting - 47%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Language Usage)	Approaching - 35%
NWEA MAP Assessment (Math)	Exceeding - 57%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Reading) - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Female (Approaching) - Male (Exceeding)	Meeting Between 45%-54.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Language Usage) - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Meeting) - Female (Approaching) - Male (Not Meeting)	Approaching Between 35%-44.9%
NWEA MAP Assessment – Subgroups (Math) - Students with IEPs (Meeting) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding)	Exceeding Exceeds 55%



Graduation	
4-Year Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 100%</i>	Exceeding
5-Year Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 100%</i>	Exceeding
6-Year Graduation Rate - <i>School reports 100%</i>	Exceeding
Post-Secondary Readiness	
Accuplacer - <i>91% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 239 or above in Reading; 90% of students are meeting the college readiness indicator of 226 or above in Math</i>	Exceeding
Accuplacer - Subgroups - Students with IEPs (Approaching) - Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding) - Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding) - Male (Exceeding) - Female (Exceeding)	Exceeding
Post-Secondary Activity Participation - <i>School reports 100%</i>	Exceeding
FAFSA Support - <i>School provided support to 26 families/students</i>	Reported as Required
Other	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	6.95% - School Reported

School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - School Fit - 90th Percentile	Exceeding 3 of the 3 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results - School Climate - 99th Percentile - Safety - 99th Percentile - Rigorous Expectations - 40th Percentile - Teacher/Student Relationships - 90th Percentile	Meeting 3 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results - School Climate - 80th Percentile - Leadership - 70th Percentile	Exceeding



- Professional Learning - 90th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 90th Percentile	4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results - School Climate - 90th Percentile - Leadership - 99th Percentile - Professional Learning - 99th Percentile - Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile	Exceeding 4 of the 4 required scales are 50% or higher when compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	Meeting

Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	Meeting - 11 Meetings Held
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	0 Agendas/0 Minutes
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>100% on time; 100% accurate</i>	Exceeding
Board Training - <i>9 requirements; 9 completed + annual board retreat</i>	Exceeding
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	Meeting

Financial Management and Viability*

Near Term Measures	
Current Ratio	Low Risk
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>235 Days Cash on Hand</i>	Low Risk
Enrollment Variance	Low Risk
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	Low Risk
Sustainability Measures	
Total 3-Year Margin	Low Risk
Debt to Asset Ratio	Low Risk
2-Year Cash Flow	Low Risk
Financial Obligations	Low Risk
Other	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	Meeting



**Based on FY25 QTR4 financials*

School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - 443 of 475 students (93.3%)	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - 302 of 321 students (94.1%)	Exceeding

School Customization

Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile on the NWEA MAP Growth School Profile Report (grades 7-11)

Term	Math	Reading	Language
Fall to Spring	65th Percentile	53rd Percentile	50th Percentile
Fall to Winter	58th Percentile	51st Percentile	54th Percentile
Winter to Spring	59th Percentile	51st Percentile	54th Percentile

SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Maine Virtual Academy (MeVA) appreciates the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) for renewing our charter contract, allowing us to continue realizing our mission and vision. We believe that MeVA is a success, academically, operationally, and financially. Major points from the self-assessment are:

- MeVAs schoolwide (grades 7-11) growth (NWEA MAP) in mathematics, reading, and language usage throughout the year is a strength of the school.
- MeVAs subgroups performed well with respect to the proficiency of state-peers on the Maine Through Year (MTY).
- MeVAs four, five, and six-year graduation rates and Accuplacer results are strengths of our school.
- MeVA continues to show excellent operational and financial performance, bolstered by our governing board involvement and K12 (Stride) support.
- MeVA lives by continuous, data-driven improvement.



Academics

The SY-2024/2025 gave MeVA the opportunity to refine our academic programming, with a view towards virtually engaging students and realizing consistently strong outcomes. Our custom performance measure that focuses on students' growth throughout the school year illustrates the effectiveness of our efforts. MeVA serves students who need alternatives to traditional district offerings. Our identification rate is higher than the state average overall and is not distributed evenly across all grade levels. Since middle school grade levels are smaller, the impact of MeVAs neediest students is disproportionately greater. However, MeVAs subgroup results provide evidence that we are maintaining an inclusive learning environment.

We have improved our school by accomplishing board-approved, standards-aligned curriculum maps for core courses in grades 7-12, providing a structure for teachers to level learning targets in accordance with students' needs. We have established a strong Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that offers students targeted instruction and tracks their performance. We are addressing MeVA students' proficiency needs by bolstering our rigorous assessment calendar with i-Readu math and reading.

MeVAs four, five, and six-year graduation rates remain high. We offered interdisciplinary project-based learning, informed by their interests, to consolidate their credit-recovery needs. Graduating students met/exceeded college-ready benchmarks on the Accuplacer math and reading.

Organizational

MeVA is a well-run organization that excels at maintaining compliance with the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and MCSC requirements. Our team works tirelessly to stay on top of our reporting calendar. The MeVA environment is supportive and communicative. Our stakeholders report strong satisfaction on the Panorama School Climate Survey. Nevertheless, MeVA is always analyzing data to better understand the challenges of our students and their families. "Customer" service is our highest priority, which is clear in MeVAs excellent student persistence results.

Governance

The MeVA governing board commits to having twelve meetings during the calendar year. Agendas and minutes are posted in advance of expectations and readily available for public view. The board is actively involved in the school, as shown by their support of our curriculum mapping project. The board recommends annual head of school goals that promote school improvement. The board sets goals for



themselves and regularly reviews their progress. The board has met their training goal for SY-2024/2025.

Financial

MeVA is fortunate to have a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) serving as our business manager and CFO. MeVA has a Human Resources Manager/Accounts Payable professional who enables payroll and benefits, and who upholds our internal controls with respect to daily financial operations. MeVA generates prompt financial reporting to the MDOE and MCSC. The annual financial audit is completed on time and shows a “clean” status.

Educational Service Providers (ESP)

MeVA is pleased with our ESP, K12 (Stride), who continue to support student recruitment and enrollment, and delivery of faculty IT. MeVAs enrollment has grown each year as we approach our maximum of four-hundred ninety-five (495) students. MeVA is confident that we will have a full school on October 1st, 2025.

Coversheet

To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report

Section:	IX. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance
Item:	B. To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report.docx.pdf

SY2024-25

Annual Charter School Report

Prepared by:

MAINE

CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION





November 2025

Commissioner Makin,

We are pleased to submit the SY2024-25 Annual Charter School Report for your review. This report fulfills our statutory obligation to provide the Commissioner of Education with an annual status report on the performance of charter schools in the state.

Maine's public charter schools serve diverse student populations, with 21.83% of students identified with disabilities and 42.71% considered economically disadvantaged. Demand continues to grow, as evidenced by a 4% increase in enrollment and approximately 40% increase in waitlists —particularly in the virtual schools.

Portfolio Strengths:

- Reading results on the Maine Through Year and NWEA MAP Assessments
- Math results on the NWEA MAP Assessments
- High school graduation rates
- College-readiness results
- Participation and successful completion of one or more post-secondary activities
- Family, teacher, and staff satisfaction
- Positive student culture and inclusive school environments; with little to no bullying reported
- Student persistence

Areas of Growth:

- Math results on the Maine Through Year Assessment
- Student attendance in half the portfolio of schools
- Student culture and climate initiatives
- Timeliness of governing board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes
- Board training completion

The Commission is made up of seven (7) members as follows – Leigh Weisenburger Albert, Commission Chair; Tom Keller, Vice Chair; Tori Kornfield; James Ford; Brian Langley; Norm Higgins; and Jim Handy and their work is supported by three staff members - myself, Amy Allen, Operations Director; and Sue Whipkey, Business Manager.



Highlights from the portfolio include:

- **ACADIA Academy (serves 246 students in grades PreK to 6)** is known for its instructional model that emphasizes small class sizes and uses every adult in the building to support small-group instruction during reading and math blocks.
- **Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (serves 384 students in grades 9 to 12)** applied for, and was granted, an Innovation Grant from the Commission aimed at designing a rigorous, real-world STEAM project while tackling a humanitarian need. The result was the design and prototype of a wheelchair suited for regions with limited infrastructure, scarce medical supplies, and under-resourced healthcare systems. The aim was to design a rigorous, real-world STEAM project while tackling a humanitarian need.
- **Community Regional Charter School (serves 373 students in grades PreK to 12)** fosters strong community connections and experiential learning opportunities for its students, including a unique competency-based approach where learners advance by mastery rather than age or grade.
- **Ecology Learning Center (serves 130 students in grades 9 to 12)** has expanded programming for students and the full community with the recent acquisition of The Clifford Arts & Student Center (“the Cliff”). It is an 8,000+ sq ft facility that provides students with state-of-the-art spaces for arts, academics, and community engagement. It includes a 200-seat theater, art gallery, studio space, commercial kitchen, and classrooms, supporting hands-on learning and real-world experiences in performance, production, and event management. The Cliff also serves as a hub for community events, giving students opportunities to lead projects, collaborate with peers, and develop practical skills in a creative and ecological learning environment.
- **Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (serves 209 students in grades PreK to 8)** recently doubled the PreK enrollment at the school given the high demand from families and community members. They also added a hand-built yurt outdoor learning space, which is now used for art classes, creative projects, Spanish instruction, reflective work, and after-school enrichment.
- **Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (serves 179 students in grades 9 to 12)** participated in the Maine Envirothon program, which provides opportunities for high school students to gain hands-on natural resource knowledge and study current environmental issues with state soil scientists, biologists, foresters, and other natural resource professionals. Congratulations to the MeANS team for placing first in the state!
- **Maine Arts Academy (serves 314 students in grades 7 to 12)** provides an arts-focused curriculum integrating academic rigor with creative expression. The school recently moved



into a new, 70,000-sq-ft campus in Augusta, which includes a dedicated dance studio, performance hall, and expanded visual arts space. In addition, they launched a **new middle school for grades 7-8** starting in Fall 2025, where they currently have a waitlist due to high demand — opening up the arts-integrated curriculum to younger students across Maine.

- **Maine Connections Academy** delivers personalized, online learning for students statewide, ensuring flexibility and support for diverse learners. MCA is seeing significantly high demand, with a robust waitlist of 416 students underscoring its popularity as a flexible virtual option.
- **Maine Virtual Academy** has achieved a 100% four-year graduation rate for the past two years, underscoring its effectiveness as a virtual learning option for Maine students. Serving grades 7–12 across the state, MeVA delivers individualized, online instruction aligned with Maine’s standards. High graduation results reflect the school’s commitment to student engagement, robust participation in state assessments (97% participation in Spring 2024), and strong student support systems.

Two schools—ACADIA Academy and Maine Arts Academy—recently completed the renewal process and were both renewed for a five-year term. MOXIE Public Schools is in its pre-opening year and will open its doors to students in the fall of 2026.

LD #1718 was introduced early in the last legislative session to reclassify the Commission as a body politic and corporate public instrumentality of the state. The legislation passed, and the public law went into effect on September 25, 2025.

We look forward to another year of collaboration with the Maine Department of Education to ensure the best education for Maine’s students and families and welcome the opportunity to discuss the details of this report with you and your team.

Sincerely,

Lana M. Ewing
Executive Director



NARRATIVE

Charter school authorizers are responsible for maintaining high standards for school performance, upholding school autonomy, and protecting student and public interests. Using a performance contract as both a guide and a tool, the Maine Charter School Commission maintains high standards and manages charter school performance – not by dictating inputs or controlling processes – but by setting expectations and holding charter districts accountable for results. The Maine Charter School Commission engages in responsible and effective performance management by ensuring charter districts have the autonomy to which they are entitled and the public accountability for which they are responsible.

The Maine Charter School Commission’s relationship with the charter districts it authorizes begins with a bargain for performance. The Maine Charter School Commission agrees to entrust a charter district’s governing board with public dollars and public school students and to give it broad autonomy over how it achieves agreed-upon goals. In return, the school’s board commits to achieving specified results, managing public funds responsibly, complying with its legal obligations, and providing a quality education to the students in its care.

In order for this bargain of autonomy in exchange for accountability to work, it is essential that the Maine Charter School Commission establish, maintain, and enforce high performance standards for all schools in its portfolio. This includes not only holding schools accountable for financial and organizational performance. The critical first step in effective performance management is to set and communicate clear and rigorous expectations for performance. Schools need clearly defined standards so they know what is expected of them, and the Maine Charter School Commission needs them to manage performance effectively by holding schools accountable for outcomes without attempting to control inputs.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers’ (NACSA’s) Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing emphasizes that a quality authorizer establishes standards for school performance that are clear, quantifiable, rigorous, and attainable. NACSA also recommends that authorizers develop and formally adopt a Performance Framework that includes academic, financial, and organizational performance measures for use by schools and authorizers to establish expectations, guide practice, assess progress, and inform decision making over the course of the charter term and at renewal or revocation.

Three areas of performance covered by the framework – academic, financial, and organization – form the backbone of the Maine Charter School Commission’s performance management system. This framework enables effective performance management and promotes school success by establishing and communicating performance expectations for all schools in the MCSC’s portfolio in a way that is objective, transparent, and directly related to school quality.

The Performance Framework promotes transparency and objectivity by putting the authorizer on record and schools, parents, stakeholders, and the public on notice about the performance standards that will be used to



evaluate whether or not a school is successful and is living up to its end of the charter bargain. The framework helps to establish expectations at the beginning of the school's operation so that there will be no surprises when a school is held accountable for meeting them over the course of the charter term and at renewal.

The framework protects school autonomy by clarifying in objective terms the performance data the Maine Charter School Commission will collect and the outcomes that it expects and will evaluate. The framework helps to establish the boundaries of the parties' relationship and define the rights and responsibilities of both the charter school and the Maine Charter School Commission.

SY2024-25 Performance Framework Outcomes:

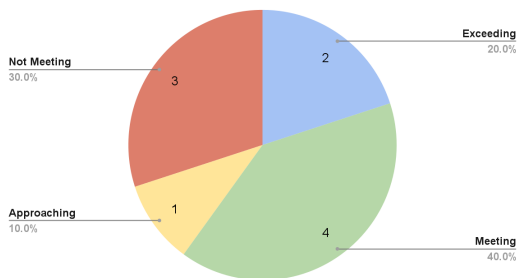
Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
------------------	----------------	--------------------	--------------------

SECTION 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Academic Achievement - Proficiency

Maine's public charter schools administer the Maine Through Year Assessment two times per year - as required by the Maine Department of Education - to measure Math and Reading proficiency of students in grades 3-8 and 10. To meet the Commission's performance target, a school will be "between $\geq 5\%$ and $< 5\%$ of the state average of students at or above expectations".

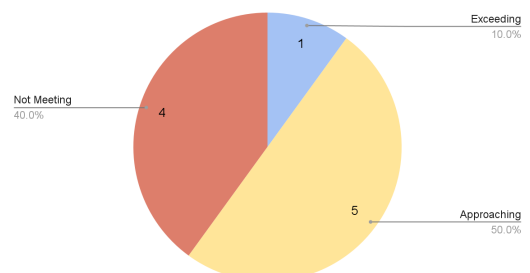
MTY Assessment - ELA



Reading performance across the portfolio is generally strong, with 70% of schools exceeding, meeting or approaching framework expectations and 30% not meeting. Four schools outperform the state average of 63% of students "at or above expectations" with Maine Arts Academy students 89.3%.

Math performance continues to be an area of focus with 60% of the portfolio exceeding, meeting or approaching framework expectations and 40% not meeting. 64% of Baxter Academy for Technology and Science students are "at or above expectations" compared to the state average of 49.4%.

MTY Assessment - Math

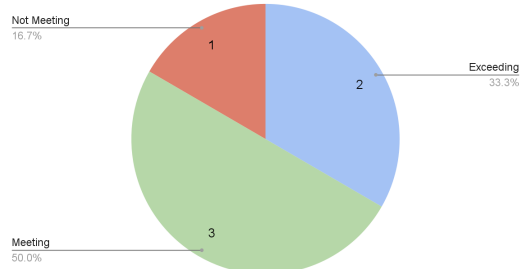




Academic Achievement - Growth

The Commission requires that public charter schools with students in grades 3-8 administer the NWEA MAP assessment to measure projected growth in Reading, Math, and Language Usage. To meet framework expectations, 45%-55% of students will meet their projected RIT growth from fall to spring.

NWEA MAP Assessment - Reading

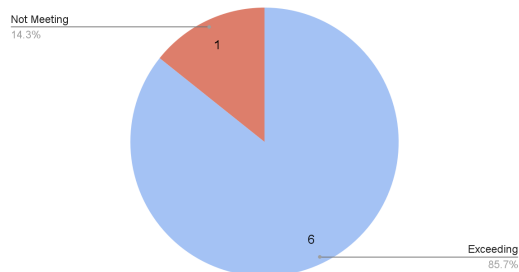


Growth across the portfolio is strong. 83% of schools are meeting or exceeding projected growth in Reading, while 100% are meeting framework expectations in Language Usage. 83% are meeting, exceeding, or nearing framework expectations in Math.

High School Graduation

High school graduation rates continue to be a strength. The Commission expects that charter public high schools meet the annual graduation goals outlined by the Maine Department of Education. In SY2024-25 the annual goal was 87%, and 6 of the 7 high schools exceeded that goal, consistent with results from a year ago.

High School Graduation Rates



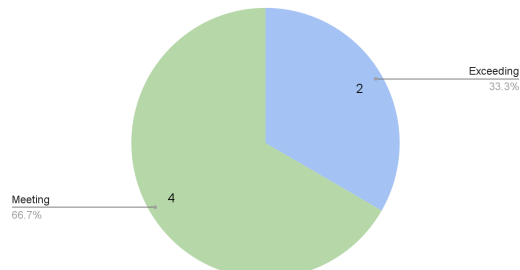
The state average for 5 and 6-year graduation rates is 89.1%. Of the 4 charter public high schools with reportable 5 and 6-year graduation rates, 3 are performing above the state average.

It is important to note that for three years in a row, Maine Virtual Academy has graduated 100% of its seniors. The state data for the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences shows the school does not meet graduation requirements and we are working with the Data Team at the Maine Department of Education to determine why. Because the school has a significantly higher self-reported rate than the state, we are researching whether the outcomes are the result of the extended school year, dropouts, a data entry issue, or students who submit a letter of intent to enroll, but never enroll.

Post-Secondary Readiness

Post-secondary readiness is the process of equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to successfully transition from high school to their next step, which could include college, career training, military service, or the workforce. It goes beyond just academics and includes developing essential life skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and career-specific competencies through

College-Readiness Assessment





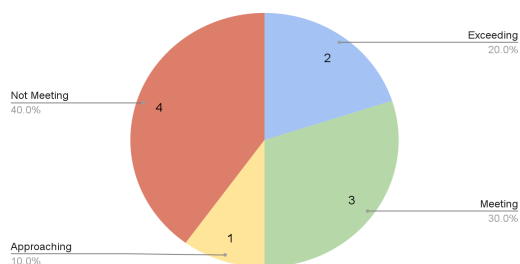
various opportunities such as dual enrollment and apprenticeships.

The Commission requires that charter public high schools assess students for college-readiness and Maine's public charter schools largely use the Accuplacer for that assessment. Performance expectations are that 75%-85% of students will meet Accuplacer's college readiness of 239 or above in Reading and 226 or above in Math, which is the benchmark that the Maine Community College system uses to enroll students in 100-level college courses without needing remediation. In SY2024-25, 100% of schools met or exceeded framework expectations.

Participation in post-secondary activities (i.e., college courses, Advanced Placement course, certification program, career technical coursework or internship) is measured by the Commission. The goal is that 70%-80% of students - at the end of their graduating year - have participated in and successfully completed at least one post-secondary activity. All charter public high schools meet or exceed that expectation - with many reporting 100%.

We know that completing the FAFSA is a critical first step in making college affordable and ensuring students can access the resources they need to succeed. The Commission monitors a charter school's ability to support students and their families with completion of the FAFSA and all charter public high schools reported annual rates and school-supported opportunities as required.

Student Attendance



Student Attendance

Chronic absenteeism rates vary greatly across the portfolio and will continue to be an area of focus and support. The Commission's framework requires that "10%-18% or fewer students are classified as chronically absent on the last day of school". The state average is 23.4% and rates across the charter school portfolio range from 6.95% to 47.62%.

Looking at how the rates for SY2024-25 compare to county rates, 6 charter campuses fall below the county rates and 4 charter campuses fall above the county rates. When accounting for grade-level comparisons of chronic absenteeism, 6 schools are performing better than the state average and 3 schools are below the state average.

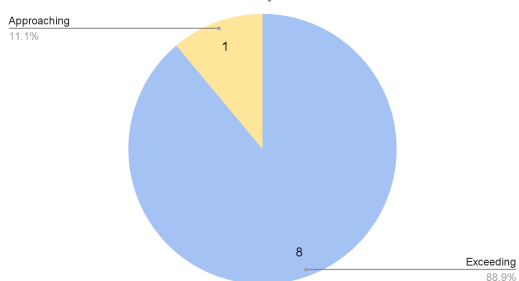
SECTION 2: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Annually each spring, Maine's public charter schools are required to administer the Panorama School Climate survey to families, students, teachers, and staff. This survey is a comprehensive tool designed to measure and improve the social and learning climate of schools. It focuses on various aspects such as student engagement,



safety, and the overall environment, including rules and norms, behaviors, student engagement, and physical facilities. The survey also assesses social connections and interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, as well as the physical and psychological climate and safety at school, including bullying, violence, and availability of support for students. It provides insights into how well schools meet the needs of students and families, contributing to a safe, caring, and welcoming environment. The survey data can be compared to national benchmarks and analyzed by various demographic groups within the school community, such as race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, and FRPL status. The Commission expects that survey results are in the 50th percentile or higher compared to similar schools nationally.

Panorama School Climate Survey - Families



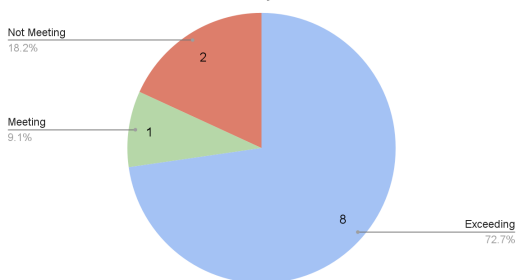
Families are asked a series of questions regarding School Climate, Safety, and School Fit and the survey results indicate that family satisfaction across the portfolio is strong.

Students are asked a series of questions regarding School Climate, Safety, Rigorous Expectations, and Teacher-Student Relationships. There are a set of questions for students in Grades 3-5 and another set of questions for students in Grades 6-12. Historically, the outcomes for students in Grades 3-5 have

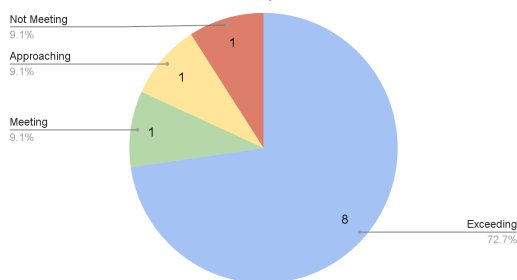
been low compared to similar schools nationally and we are working with the Panorama Education team to determine if the results we're seeing are comparable to what they're seeing across the country or if Maine's results are an anomaly. Results from students in Grades 6-12 are mixed, with 66% of schools meeting or exceeding framework expectations.

Teachers and Staff are asked a series of questions regarding School Climate, Leadership, Professional Learning, and Feedback and Coaching. 82% of teacher responses met or exceeded framework expectations, while 91% of staff responses met or exceeded framework expectations.

Panorama School Climate Survey - Teachers



Panorama School Climate Survey - Staff





SECTION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

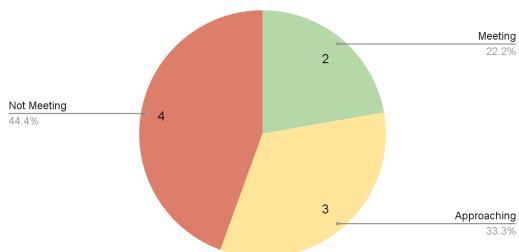
Governing Board Effectiveness

A charter school governing board is a non-profit organization responsible for the overall leadership, management, and oversight of a charter school. It sets the school's vision and mission, ensures compliance with its charter and state laws, and maintains financial and academic accountability. The board is the ultimate legal and financial authority for the school, often composed of community leaders, educators, parents, and other stakeholders.

Public Accountability

The governing boards from all charter public schools meet regularly throughout the school year and meetings are held in accordance with approved bylaws and in accordance with the Freedom of Access Act. Boards are active and engaged, demonstrate appropriate oversight, have clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication, and engage in continuous and strategic improvement and planning.

Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes



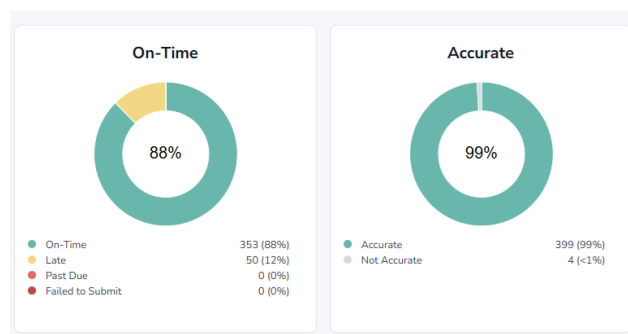
The performance framework indicates that governing board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes should be posted “timely” with timely being defined as 5 business days prior to a board meeting for the meeting agenda and 5 business days after a board meeting for approved meeting minutes. This is an area of focus for the portfolio with just over half of the boards posting within the defined timeframes.

Board Training

The Commission requires school governing board members to engage in a baseline of annual training and development. Two boards exceeded framework expectations, but less than half of the governing boards met the SY2024-25 requirement and will continue to be an area of focus for the Commission.

Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness

The Commission uses the Epicenter platform to collect required documents from schools with a goal of 80%-90% of those reports will be submitted on time and accurately. Of the 403 required submissions in SY2024-25, 88% were submitted on time with 99% accuracy.





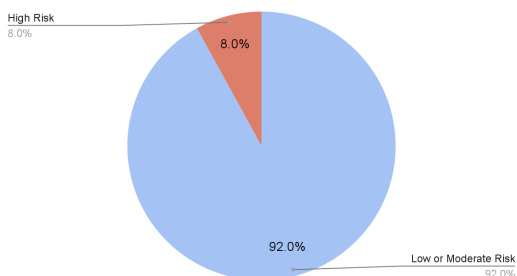
Charter schools certify that their facility (or facilities) meet all local and state requirements for public school facilities and that facilities provide safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing campus environments that optimize learning, teaching, and working for all students, faculty, and staff.

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND VIABILITY

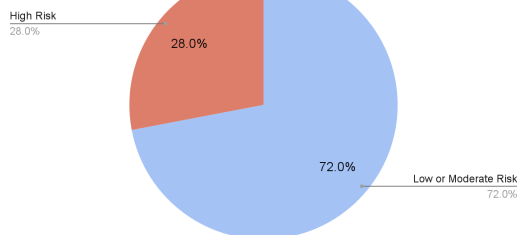
Financial oversight of charter schools involves a multi-layered system with federal, state, and local entities. It includes initial budget and financial plan approval, regular financial and compliance audits, ongoing reporting, and interventions for schools that show a deteriorating financial condition. Key oversight components include annual independent audits, ensuring the school's board and management maintain proper fiscal authority and controls, and adhere to federal, state, and local financial regulations.

Maine's charter public schools maintain a sound and stable financial condition and operate in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner as evidenced by results from 4th Quarter financials. Overall, schools fall into the Low to Moderate Risk categories for Near-Term and Sustainability Measures.

Near-Term Measures



Sustainability Measures



The Commission expects schools to have at least 30 days cash on hand and most schools meet or exceed that goal.

SECTION 5: SCHOOL MISSION AND STUDENT PERSISTENCE

A charter school's mission is to provide a free, public education with an innovative or specialized focus, letting parents and students decide the right public education option to meet their needs. Each charter school has a unique mission, outlined in its charter, which details its specific goals, curriculum, and methods for achieving academic results, such as improving student achievement, creating opportunities for teachers, or using innovative teaching methods. In return for this operational flexibility, they are held accountable for student performance.

Mission

All schools in the charter portfolio are faithful to their mission and implement the key design elements outlined in their charter contracts. Key design elements are aspects of the school, originally articulated in the charter



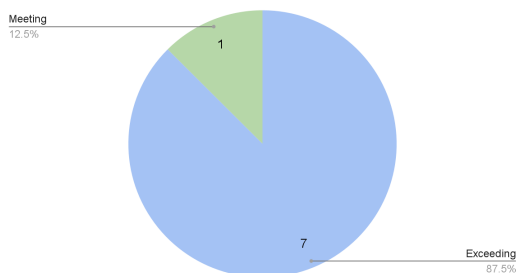
application or in subsequent amendments, which make the school unique and distinct from other district or charter schools.

Student Persistence

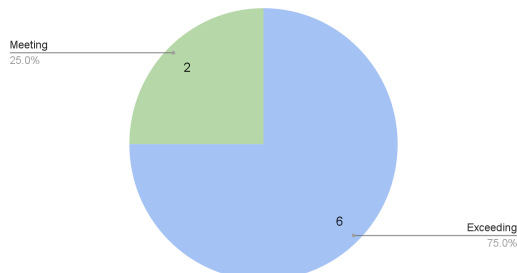
Student enrollment and persistence is a leading indicator of school health and the Commission expects 85% student persistence throughout the school year and recurrent enrollment from one year to the next.

In SY2024-25, 100% of Maine's public charter schools met or exceeded framework expectations which is consistent year after year.

Student Persistence: (Year-to-Year)



Student Persistence: School Year



SECTION 6: SCHOOL CUSTOMIZATION

Schools work with the Commission to design and execute customized goals for mission-specific accountability that ensures charter schools are delivering the innovative, high-quality education they promised. 86% of the customized goals are being met or exceeded.

- **ACADIA Academy** measures progress toward implementation of the BARR framework and writing growth for students in grades K-2.
- **Baxter Academy for Technology and Science** measures performance on the PSAT 10 and SAT 11 compared to state averages, grade-level proficiency in Math, Reading, and Science compared to state averages, and targets related to Flex Friday.
- **Community Regional Charter School** focuses on projected growth within the standard deviation on NWEA MAP Assessments - Reading, Math, and Language Usage. Meeting.
- **Ecology Learning Center** focuses on outcomes of their week-long winter Passion Projects.
- **Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences** focuses on clear classroom standards and assessments to document learning.
- **Maine Academy of Natural Sciences** measures the work done in Intensives, post-secondary opportunities for students, Campus graduation, and participation in voluntary NWEA Testing for students in both programs.



- **Maine Arts Academy** measures participation in activities related to the arts and on performance proficiency.
- **Maine Connections Academy** captures the participation rates for in-person extracurricular activities.
- **Maine Virtual Academy** measures student growth in Math, Reading, and Language Usage at three separate intervals throughout the school year – Fall to Spring, Fall to Winter, and Winter to Spring - for all students in Grades 7-11.

The status of the portfolio

Approved, but not yet open

MOXIE Public Schools	Application approved on May 13, 2025 (<i>opening Fall 2026</i>)
----------------------	---

Operating

ACADIA Academy	Originally opened in 2016
Baxter Academy for Technology and Science	Originally opened in 2013
Community Regional Charter School	Originally opened in 2012
Ecology Learning Center	Originally opened in 2020
Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences	Originally opened in 2013
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences	Originally opened in 2012
Maine Arts Academy	Originally opened in 2016
Maine Connections Academy	Originally opened in 2014
Maine Virtual Academy	Originally opened in 2015

Renewed

Ecology Learning Center	Renewed in October 2024
Maine Virtual Academy	Renewed in October 2024

Transferred	<i>None</i>	Closed	<i>None</i>
Terminated	<i>None</i>	Never Opened	<i>None</i>



Our strategic vision

After making significant progress toward the priorities outlined in the Commission’s “Strategic Plan 2021-2024”, the Commission launched its “Strategic Plan 2025-2028” in January of this year. The Commission aims to provide educational options to families and students by positioning charter schools as an integral part of the school-choice ecosystem in Maine. In particular, the charter schools in Maine attract students and families who seek alternative school environments that may not be easily offered through a traditional system. From virtual schools serving students from over 200 cities, towns, and unorganized territories, to arts and STEAM academies in more populated areas, charters provide diverse educational options for families seeking choice. We have seen the demand for charters increase, even as traditional district public school enrollment has decreased due to declining population and a significant drop during the pandemic. As demand increases, the Commission will stay true to its mission “to authorize, monitor, and support innovative public charter schools that provide a dynamic, high-quality education for every student.” By committing to consistent, high-quality authorizing, monitoring and improvement, the Commission will ensure that its vision will be realized: “innovative public charter schools will provide Maine students with an equitable opportunity for an excellent education where students are valued, supported, and challenged”.

Values:

- **Excellence:** Pursue high-quality schools with excellent student outcomes
- **Students First:** Ground our actions in promoting great opportunities for students and families
- **Equity:** Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion as strengths that contribute to innovative and successful schools
- **Collaboration:** Work with schools and community stakeholders to shape excellent schools grounded in trust
- **Innovation:** Encourage dynamic, new and different educational models that expand opportunities for students
- **Accountability:** Hold ourselves and schools to rigorous standards using a high bar for quality and transparency

The following are the tools that the Commission has at its disposal to enhance outcomes for students and families:

- **Contracts between charter boards and the Charter Commission** allow us to set expectations for performance and leverage legal tools to enforce a shared covenant.
- **The Performance Framework** provides details on how each charter operator is making progress toward a high bar for performance on multiple domains ranging from student achievement to financial health.
- **Reporting systems** allow the Charter Commission to publicly share the overall health and performance of the charter school program in Maine, providing transparency and context for school quality.



- **Service and authorizing fees** ensure that the charter Commission has the necessary resources to support the monitoring of charter schools and provides services to each operator.
- **Access to MDOE and other state level actors** positions the Charter Commission to coordinate and communicate with other state leaders to increase achievement and well-being of students.
- **The power to convene and network** allows the charter operators to collaborate and connect organizations with shared interests to solve problems.

The strategic priorities represent the focus of our work for the next three years. They provide us with an opportunity to make thoughtful decisions about what is important, what isn't, and the rationale that shaped our thinking.

Strategic Priority #1: Encourage excellent, innovative schools

The core of our work is ensuring that Maine charter schools are models of excellence for public schools that provide innovative and exceptional educational options available to all students. Charter schools have greater autonomy – and responsibility – to push the boundaries of a traditional educational model with innovative programming that encourages excellence.

This priority will be driven by the following actions:

- ➔ Allocate funds annually for an Innovation Fund to which the charter school(s) may separately or jointly apply to fund innovative programming to increase student achievement, improve student opportunities, and enhance services to students.
- ➔ Use the Performance Framework as a mirror to reflect school performance back to each charter school across multiple measures of achievement, encouraging schools to highlight what is unique about their programming. The Performance Framework clarifies and prioritizes practices, such as fiscal stewardship, for operating an excellent school and provides school performance transparency to the full school community.
- ➔ Collaborate with school leaders through professional learning, networking, and collective problem solving to maximize efforts toward achieving missions. The Charter Commission will connect school leaders to solve shared problems in collaborative ways through monthly meetings, and semi-annually professional development opportunities.
- ➔ Provide semi-annual School Board Professional Development to support sustained charter school excellence. The Charter Commission will connect school boards to solve shared problems in collaborative ways through semi-annually professional development opportunities.
- ➔ Approve expansions of existing schools when they have demonstrated strong community demand, an innovative model, and high-performance outcomes.



Strategic Priority #2: Authorize Excellent New Charter School(s)

The Commission has the authority to authorize charter schools in Maine. We commit to engaging in a fair, thorough process that will result in the opening and sustained excellence of new charter school(s) that will expand high-quality educational options for students and families in Maine.

This priority will be driven by the following actions:

- A thoughtful and rigorous new school application review process that includes a fair review of all applications using a revised application rubric based on nationally recognized high-quality examples and a team process that holds a high bar for school quality and sustainability.
- Ongoing support for charter applicants through monthly information sessions with the Executive Director and process, document and timeline transparency.
- If a new charter school is selected, the Commission will provide guidance and support in the preoperational year to encourage a strong start to the school through publishing a Ready-to-Open Guide and working in partnership with the school's founding team to outline deadlines for the key components of launching the new year.

Strategic Priority #3: Good to Great Authorizing

The Maine Charter School Commission will model thoughtful, effective and efficient governance and decision making with procedures for evaluating its own performance and encouraging continuous improvement.

This priority will be driven by the following actions:

- Thorough onboarding of new Commission Members to ensure continuity of mission focus and decision-making that supports an innovative, high-quality charter network.
- Highlighting the work of charter schools in Maine with policymakers to support policies and practices that increase school quality, choice and funding.
- Learn from national authorizing partners by engaging in semi-annual professional development and sharing lessons learned, to focus our efforts on authorizing best practices and model continuous learning and improvement.
- Model board efficiency by using the latest board technology and strategies to run efficient, informed, and collaborative meetings.

Strategic Priority #4: Organizational Excellence

The Commission staff will make changes to ensure that we are operating at our most effective to provide excellent service to all charter school stakeholders.

This priority will be driven by the following actions:

- Support legislative change that reclassifies the Maine Charter School Commission as a body corporate and politic and a public instrumentality of the State.



- Implement operational efficiency by acquiring a bank account, credit card and contracting with high-quality service providers.
- Use public funds wisely by eliminating redundant fees, such as the annual fee to a temporary agency to staff our long-term, full time staff members.

The oversight and services provided to public charter schools

The primary purpose of site visits is to inform authorizer decisions, both imminent, such as assessing a school's readiness to open, and longitudinal, when a visit is undertaken mid-term as part of routine monitoring.

The purpose of monitoring visits is to gauge the overall progress a school is making toward the mission and goals outlined in its charter. In most cases, the authorizer will already possess some quantitative data about that progress – academic performance, attendance rates, graduation rates, and other annual outcomes, so a monitoring visit can help explain the context behind that data and explore the school's fidelity to its approved program.

Site visits are a mechanism for collecting additional evidence regarding a school's performance against the expectations memorialized in its contract and contribute to the body of data authorizers utilize to ultimately make renewal recommendations. They provide Commission staff with the opportunity to review and analyze documentation that may be better understood onsite, such as factors impacting attendance, or rates of academic growth across subgroups. Site visits can provide a basis for authorizer judgment or intervention where there is limited state assessment data yet available.

The Commission's Monitoring Site Visits are based on both the criteria set forth in the school's performance framework and the school's alignment with its mission. The categories in the performance framework are student achievement, school climate and family engagement, organizational sustainability, financial management and viability, school mission and student persistence, and a school's customized criteria.

The Commission has established a monitoring visit table for visit frequency and intensity. At its discretion, commission staff may opt to not conduct monitoring site visits in accordance with the Site Visit Table for schools that are performing well. Likewise, staff may choose to visit a school that is not on a visit cycle for any reason.

Although not statutorily required, Commission staff will conduct annual mid-year check-in visits with the school's administrative team and board chair to gauge progress toward meeting end-of-year criteria on the Performance Framework.



Services to support excellent performance

- Panorama - The Maine Charter School Commission began its partnership with Panorama Education in 2016. Each spring, schools are required to distribute school climate surveys to families, students, and staff. Results are compared to “like schools nationally” and performance outcomes are reported in monitoring reports that are completed annually in November. As part of the Commission’s contract with Panorama Education, schools have access to “Social Emotional Learning - Student Competency & Well Being Measures” content. Although not required, three schools took advantage of those tools this past year.
- Infinite Campus - Infinite Campus is a powerful student information system that supports student learning by ensuring school districts streamline educational processes, promote stakeholder collaboration and personalize learning. The Commission continued its partnership with Infinite Campus throughout the 2023-24 school year with 8 of the 10 public charter schools actively using the platform.
- Epicenter - Maine’s public charter schools are held to a rigorous Performance Framework which measures academic, financial, and organizational success. Epicenter is a web-based platform that streamlines school operations, board governance, and school compliance activities and puts data and documents at the fingertips of authorizers and authorized schools 24/7/365. The Commission began its partnership with Epicenter in the fall of 2016 and the relationship is strong to this day. Both the renewal application and the new school application are now online using Epicenter’s “EdLusion” platform and work is currently underway to assess performance framework outcomes using “scorecards” that will streamline annual reporting going forward.
- Lotterease - Maine’s public charter schools must follow enrollment as outlined in Maine State Law (Title 20-A, Chapter 112, §2404). There are many different parts to enrollment and the lottery process, which can be complicated when keeping track of it all manually. The Commission sought a web-based platform that could assist schools in the management of the enrollment process from the initial contact with families through full enrollment of their child(ren) and partnered with Lotterease in 2000.
- BoardOnTrack - The BoardOnTrack platform empowers school boards and executive leaders to reach a higher bar, together. Board members are equipped with a powerful combination of data and proven practices to govern for growth, without drowning in the details that form the underpinnings of good governance. Executive leaders are enabled to leverage their boards as strategic governing partners without turning board management into a full-time job. BoardOnTrack simplifies board governance and helps boards to deliver on its commitments.

Financial performance

State law allows the Charter School Commission to draw up to 3% of the annual per-pupil allocation received by each public charter school under its authorization. In FY25, the Commission remained at the 2.45% allocation.



Based on the FY25 ED279s, the Commission's revenue was \$811,422.46 and \$731,200.43 was spent on monitoring performance and supporting the success of Maine's public charter schools. A financial order requesting additional funds for staffing, NWEA testing and Epicenter enhancements was granted in January 2025. Any balance was carried over to FY26.

Coversheet

To Consider Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Request to Amend Bylaws

Section:	IX. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance
Item:	C. To Consider Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Request
to Amend Bylaws	
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	MeANS Request to Amend Bylaws - October 2025.pdf



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 Wednesday 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	October 25, 2025
School Name and Mailing Address	Maine Academy of Natural Sciences 13 Easler Road, PO Box 158 Hinckley, ME 04944
Contact	Mary Callan, MeANS Board Chair
Contact telephone number	(207)716-6164
Contact email address	mcallan.me@gmail.com

Provide a brief narrative description of the request.

Goodwill-Hinckley (GWH) opened Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) as an independent school (without separate entity) in 2011, and received charter status for MeANS in 2012 under the leadership of then GWH CEO, Glen Cummings. He and the board of GWH wanted to be an integral part of MeANS at the board level. Board policies were written to give GWH the right to appoint members to the board from the GWH board. This was intended to keep the two entities working in tandem.

In September 2022, MeANS separated from GWH due to the Maine law creating Charters indicating that there needs to be a firewall between a pre-existing organization which founded the Charter and the Charter itself. In 2021, the Maine Charter School Commission's MeANS Yr 4 Performance Report states that ... "The Board and school leaders should clarify its relationship with Good Will-Hinckley, so that MeANS can become more autonomous in critical decisions impacting school performance." To that end, the GWH and MeANS board established a path towards a separation of the two organizations.

In order to meet this outcome, MeANS needed to revise language that tied the two organizations together. MeANS consulted with their school attorney (Drummond Woodsum Attorneys-at-Law) who, with the support of the Charter Commission, helped MeANS to amend the bylaws so that the GWH language was removed and the composition of the MeANS Board was re-framed to disentangle the two entities.

When I became Board Chair in 2025, I realized that the amended bylaws had not been formally approved by the Commission, and I am correcting that oversight now. Approval of these bylaws will not change how the MeANS Board currently operates.

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

BYLAWS OF MAINE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

LMC draft 7-23-2012 Updated 3-3-2014, Updated 10-17-2020 Redline 9-12-2022 CLEAN 9-15-2022

ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATION

Section 1.1 Name. The name of the Corporation is Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.

Section 1.2 Purpose. The Corporation is organized as a public benefit corporation exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code"), or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. In furtherance thereof, but not by way of limitation, the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences will provide an inspiring and inclusive learning environment to students who are primarily under-engaged and at risk of dropping out of high school. Utilizing an individualized, project-based approach, a MeANS education will be rooted in the themes of agriculture, forestry and the environment. Our core values will be respect, responsibility and service to the community.

The Corporation shall be organized and empowered to do everything necessary, proper, advisable or convenient for the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes, and to do all other things incidental to them, or connected with them, that are not forbidden by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws; provided, however, that the Corporation shall not have the power to carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Code by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Code.

Section 1.3 Place of Business. The Corporation shall have its principal place of business in Hinckley, Maine. Unless otherwise designated by the Board of Directors, the mailing address for the Corporation shall be in Hinckley, Maine. The Corporation may have such other offices, within the State of Maine, as the Board of Directors may determine from time to time.

Section 1.4 Registered Agent and Registered Office. The registered agent of the Corporation is the person designated in the Articles of Incorporation, as amended from time to time by the Board of Directors. The registered office of the Corporation shall be the business office of the registered agent of the Corporation.

Section 1.5 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be July 1- June 30.

ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERS

Reserved.

ARTICLE 3 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 3.1 General Powers. The activities of the Corporation shall be managed and controlled by a Board of Directors. All the corporate powers, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and in the laws of the State of Maine, shall be vested in and exercised by the Board of Directors.

Section 3.2 Qualifications. No Director shall receive compensation for services provided as an employee of the Corporation while serving as a Director. At no time shall more than 49% of the Directors on the Board be “financially interested persons” as that term is defined by 13-B M.R.S.A. § 713-A, or any successor provision thereof.

Section 3.3 Number. The number of Directors constituting the Board of Directors shall be determined within the limits set forth in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 3.4 Election; Term of Office.

The appointment, election, and terms of office of the Directors shall be as follows:

- (a) Directors shall be elected by the Board. Board seats for Directors whose terms have expired shall be filled annually by a majority vote of the Board at the annual meeting.
- (b) Except as otherwise provided herein, each Director shall hold office for a term of three (3) years or until the Director's successor has been elected and installed. Each new Director shall assume his or her Board position immediately upon adjournment of the annual meeting during which he or she was elected or appointed. The terms of office of Directors shall be established in such a manner that one-third (as nearly as may be) of the Directors' terms expire at each annual meeting. To accomplish this, the Board may assign one or more Directors to a term shorter than three (3) years by random drawing or similar means.
- (c) No Director shall serve more than two (2) consecutive 3-year terms in addition to any 1-year or 2-year terms that may be established so that one third (as nearly as may be) of the Directors' terms expire at each annual meeting.. For any Director who has served two consecutive 3-year terms, he/she shall not be eligible for reappointment or reelection until the second annual meeting held after the annual meeting marking the conclusion of his/her term (i.e., approximately two years). For purposes of this provision, a Director who resigns from the Board during his or her term shall be deemed to have served two (2) full terms.

Section 3.5 Vacancies. A vacancy on the Board of Directors occurs upon the resignation, death, ~~incapacity~~, removal, or an increase in the number of Directors. A vacancy shall be filled by affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining Directors (~~even if less than a quorum~~) for the unexpired portion of the term. If any Director is elected to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term, the unexpired portion of the term he/she is filling shall not count toward the term limits imposed by Section 3.4.

Section 3.6 Annual Meeting of Directors. The annual meeting of Directors shall be held on or before June 30th of each year at a time and place determined by the Board of Directors to elect Directors to replace those whose terms are expiring, to elect officers, and to transact other corporate business.

Section 3.7 Regular Meetings. The Board of Directors may provide by resolution the time and place for the holding of regular meetings without other notice of such resolution. The Board shall hold regular meetings no less frequently than quarterly.

Section 3.8 Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Board Chair or if the Board Chair is absent or unable to act, by the Board Vice-Chair, or if both the

Board Chair and the Board Vice-Chair are absent or unable to act, by the Secretary, and must be called on the written request of any two Directors.

Section 3.9 Notice of Meetings. Notice of any special meeting shall be given by mailing written notice at least three (3) days before the meeting or by telephone at least one (1) day before the meeting. Notice of a meeting need not be given to any Director who signs a waiver of notice either before or after the meeting. Neither the business to be transacted nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of the meeting. Attendance of a Director at a meeting shall constitute waiver of notice of such meeting, unless the Director attends the meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. To the extent required by law, notice of meetings shall be provided to the public or, in the event of an emergency meeting, to local representatives of the media.

Section 3.10 Chair. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the Board Chair, or in his/her absence, the Board Vice Chair, shall preside. If neither the Board Chair nor Board Vice Chair are available, the Directors shall choose a Director to preside.

Section 3.11 Quorum. A majority of the Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors, and the act of a majority of the Directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by statute, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws.

Section 3.12 Unanimous Action of Directors Without a Meeting. Any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors or by a committee of the Directors may be taken without a meeting if all of the Directors or all of the members of the committee, as the case may be, sign written consents setting forth the action taken or to be taken, at any time before or after the intended effective date of such action. Such consents shall be filed with the minutes of Directors' meetings and shall have the same effect as a unanimous vote.

Section 3.13 Attendance at Meetings. Regular attendance at Board meetings in person is expected of all Directors. A Director who has four (4) consecutive unexcused absences from Board meetings shall be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from the Board. With prior approval of the Board Chair, or in his/her absence, the Secretary, Directors may participate in meetings of the Board of

Directors via conference call or similar mechanism by which each Director can hear and be heard by all those present. To the extent required by law, Director meetings shall be open to attendance by the public.

Section 3.14 Removal. Any Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by a majority vote of all of the Board of Directors then in office.

ARTICLE 4 – COMMITTEES

Section 4.1 Designation. The Board of Directors, by a resolution adopted by a majority of the full Board of Directors, may designate such committees as the Board deems appropriate or necessary.

Section 4.2 Committee Members. Members of any committee of the Corporation shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Except as otherwise specified in these Bylaws or expressly determined by the Board, the Board Chair shall appoint the membership of committees. Each committee may prescribe rules and regulations for the call and conduct of committee meetings, and each committee shall maintain minutes of its meetings and other records appropriate to its purposes and shall make regular reports to the Directors as and when requested by the Board Chair.

ARTICLE 5 – OFFICERS

Section 5.1 Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall consist of a Board Chair, a Board Vice-Chair, a Head of School, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and such other officers and assistant officers as the Board of Directors shall deem desirable. No two offices may be held by the same person. In addition to the duties and powers specifically set forth in these Bylaws, each officer shall have such duties and power as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe.

Section 5.2 Election and Term of Office. The officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting, or as soon thereafter as convenient and each officer then holding an elective office shall continue to hold said office or offices until his or her successor shall have been duly elected.

Section 5.3 Qualifications. The Board Chair, Board Vice -Chair, and Secretary shall be elected from among the Directors of the Corporation.

Section 5.4 Vacancies. A vacancy in any office caused by death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5.5 Chair of the Finance Committee. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall have the oversight of all financial affairs of the Corporation.

Section 5.6 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the powers and authority of the treasurer of a non profit corporation under the Maine Nonprofit Corporations Act. Subject to the direction of the Board, the Treasurer, shall have general charge of the financial affairs of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Corporation, subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Board. The Treasurer may be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board may require. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys of the Corporation in such depositories as may be designated by the Board. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of the receipts and disbursements of the Corporation in suitable books of the Corporation and shall exhibit such books upon request of any officer or Director for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

Section 5.7 Secretary. The Secretary shall have charge of such books, documents, and papers as the Board of Directors may determine and shall have the custody of the corporate seal. The Secretary shall attend and keep or cause to be kept the minutes of all the meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a record of the names and addresses of the Board of Directors. The Secretary may certify all votes, resolutions, and actions of the Board of Directors and of its committees.

Section 5.8 Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair. The Board Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall have such other powers and responsibilities as set forth in these Bylaws. If the Board Chair is unable to preside, the Vice Chair shall preside and have all the powers vested in the Chair.

Section 5.9 Head of School. The Head of School shall have such authority and responsibilities as designated by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 6 - INDEMNIFICATION

Section 6.1 **Indemnity.** The Corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, by reason of the fact that that person is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, trustee, partner, fiduciary, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorneys fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by that person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding; provided that no indemnification shall be provided for any person with respect to any matter as to which that person has been finally adjudicated not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that that person's action was in the best interests of the Corporation or, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, to have had reasonable cause to believe that that person's conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order or conviction adverse to such person, or by settlement or plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not of itself create a presumption that such person did not act in good faith in the reasonable belief that such person's action was in the best interests of the Corporation and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that such person's conduct was unlawful.

Section 6.2 **Indemnity Against Expenses.** To the extent that a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any such action, suit or proceeding, or in the defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, that Director, officer, employee or agent shall be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys fees, actually and reasonably incurred by that Director, officer, employee or agent in connection therewith.

Section 6.3 **Determination.** Any indemnification shall be made by the Corporation only as authorized in the specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the Director, officer, employee or agent is proper under the circumstances and in the best interest of the Corporation. That determination shall be made by the Board of Directors by majority vote of a quorum consisting of Directors who are not parties to that action, suit or proceeding, or if such a quorum is not obtainable, or even if obtainable, if a quorum of disinterested Directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

Section 6.4 **Payment of Expenses.** Expenses incurred in defending a civil, criminal, administrative or investigative action, suit or proceeding may be authorized and paid by the Corporation

in advance of the final disposition of that action, suit or proceeding upon a determination made in accordance with the procedure established in the foregoing section that, based on the facts then known to those making the determination and without further investigation, the person seeking indemnification satisfied the standard of conduct provided herein, upon receipt by the Corporation of a written undertaking by or on behalf of the officer, Director, employee or agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that the person is entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation as authorized in this Article.

Section 6.5 Insurance. By action of the Board of Directors, notwithstanding any interest of the Directors in the action, the Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance, in such amounts as the Board of Directors deems appropriate, on behalf of any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another organization, against any liability asserted against such person and incurred by such person in any such capacity or arising out of his/her status as such, whether or not the Corporation would have the power or would be required to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of this Article 6 or of the laws of the State of Maine.

ARTICLE 7 - CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, GIFTS

Section 7.1 Contracts. The Board of Directors, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may authorize any officer or agent to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance; and unless so authorized by the Board of Directors, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit, or render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or to any amount.

Section 7.2 Checks. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the Board Chair.

Section 7.3 Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

Section 7.4 Gifts. The Board of Directors may accept, on behalf of the Corporation, any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 8 - BOOKS AND RECORDS

Article 8.1 The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of all accounts and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors, which book, records, and minutes shall be kept by the Secretary of the Board of Directors. Such records shall be kept at the registered office of the Corporation, or other place designated by the Board of Directors. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any officer, Director, or their agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE 9 - NONPROFIT STATUS

Section 9.1 Prohibition Against Sharing in Corporate Earnings. No Director, officer, or employee of, or member of a committee of, or person connected with the Corporation, or any other private individual shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operations of the Corporation, provided, that this shall not prevent the payment to any such person of such reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Corporation in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the Board of Directors; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets upon the dissolution of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENTS

Section 10.1 Amendment. Only the Board of Directors shall have power to amend the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, and to make, amend, and repeal the Bylaws of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 11 - DISSOLUTION

Section 11.1 Manner of Dissolution. The Corporation may be dissolved in accordance with the Maine Nonprofit Corporation Act, the Articles of Incorporation, and these Bylaws.

Section 11.2 Disposition of Assets. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, transfer and convey any remaining property and assets of the Corporation shall be distributed exclusively to one or more nonprofit organizations which may be selected by the Directors as an appropriate recipient of such assets, as long as each of such organizations shall be engaged in such substantially similar activities and qualify as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Notwithstanding the foregoing, remaining funds shall be paid to the State of Maine exclusively for public purposes to the extent required by 20-A M.R.S.A. Section 2411(8) or successor provision thereof.

ARTICLE 12 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Section 12.1 Definition of Conflict-of-Interest Transaction. For purposes of this Article 12, a conflict-of-interest transaction is a transaction in which a Director or officer of the Corporation has a direct or indirect financial interest. For purposes of this Article 12, a Director or Officer has an indirect financial interest in a transaction if:

- (a) Another entity in which the Director or officer has a material interest or in which the Director or officer is a general partner (or the functional equivalent thereto) is a party to the transaction; or
- (b) Another entity of which the Director or officer is a director, officer, or trustee is a party to the transaction.

Section 12.2 Approval of Conflict of Interest Transactions. A conflict-of-interest transaction may be approved before or after consummation of the transaction as follows: The Board of Directors of the Corporation or a committee of the Board with authority may authorize, approve or ratify the transaction if the material facts of the transaction and the director's or officer's interest are disclosed or known to the Board or the authorized committee of the Board. The transaction may be approved only if it is fair and equitable to the Corporation as of the date the transaction is authorized, approved or ratified. The party asserting fairness of any such transaction has the burden of establishing fairness. For purposes of this section, a conflict-of-interest transaction is approved if it receives the affirmative vote of a majority of the Directors on the Board of Directors or on an authorized committee of the Board who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction, but a transaction may not be approved by a single director. If a majority of the Directors on the Board who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction vote to approve the transaction, a quorum is present for the purpose of taking action under this section.

Section 12.3 General Policy and Procedures Concerning Conflicts of Interest. Attached hereto and incorporated herein is **Schedule 12.3 (General Policy and Procedures for Conflicts of Interest)**. The policy and procedures set forth in Schedule 12.3 supplement the more specific provisions contained in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 above. At all times all Directors, officers, and other representatives or agents of the Corporation shall be subject to and shall comply with the general policies and procedures set forth in Schedule 12.3, and as applicable, the more specific procedures set forth in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 above.

SCHEDULE 12.3

GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Article I - Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt corporation's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or Director of the Corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace the provisions of Sections 12.1 and 12.2 of the Bylaws. To the extent Sections 12.1 and 12.2 apply to any transaction, the procedures set forth therein shall be followed. In all other cases, the following applies.

Article II - Definitions

1. Interested Person. Any Director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement,

b. A compensation arrangement with the corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or

c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Board or Board designated committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III - Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of committees, if any, with governing Board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.

a. An interested person may make a presentation at the Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

b. The chair of the Board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

c. After exercising due diligence, the Board or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors or committee members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

a. If the Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board or committee determines the person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV - Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the Board and all committees with Board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V - Compensation

- a. A voting member of the Board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI - Annual Statements

Each Director, Officer and member of a committee with governing Board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands the Corporation is charitable and, in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII - Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.

b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII - Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

BYLAWS

OF

MAINE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

LMC draft 7-23-2012 Updated 3-3-2014, Updated 10-17-2020 **Redline 9-12-2022**

ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATION

Commented [DWM1]: 9-13-2022: DWM edits that are on top of prior draft are highlighted for ease of review.

Commented [DWM2R1]: One revision on 9/15/2022

Section 1.1 Name. The name of the Corporation is Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.

Section 1.2 Purpose. The Corporation is organized as a public benefit corporation exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code"), or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. In furtherance thereof, but not by way of limitation, the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences will provide an inspiring and inclusive learning environment to students who are primarily under-engaged and at risk of dropping out of high school. Utilizing an individualized, project-based approach, a MeANS education will be rooted in the themes of agriculture, forestry and the environment. Our core values will be respect, responsibility and service to the community.

The Corporation shall be organized and empowered to do everything necessary, proper, advisable or convenient for the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes, and to do all other things incidental to them, or connected with them, that are not forbidden by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws; provided, however, that the Corporation shall not have the power to carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Code by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Code.

Section 1.3 Place of Business. The Corporation shall have its principal place of business in Hinckley, Maine. Unless otherwise designated by the Board of Directors, the mailing address for the Corporation shall be in Hinckley, Maine. The Corporation may have such other offices, within the State of Maine, as the Board of Directors may determine from time to time.

Section 1.4 Registered Agent and Registered Office. The registered agent of the Corporation is the person designated in the Articles of Incorporation, as amended from time to time by the Board of Directors. The registered office of the Corporation shall be the business office of the registered agent of the Corporation.

Section 1.5 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be July 1- June 30.

ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERS

Reserved

Commented [DWM3]: Need to amend Article SIXTH and Exhibit C in the Articles of incorporation to reflect that there are no members.

~~**Section 2.1** Identification of Members. There shall be one class of Members of the Corporation. The only member of the Corporation shall be Good Will Home Association, a Maine nonprofit corporation recognized by the IRS as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code (hereinafter the "Member"). There shall be no membership fees or dues.~~

~~**Section 2.2** Rights and Powers. The Member shall have all the voting rights set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, these Corporate Bylaws, or pursuant to the Act. Action by the Member shall be taken by unanimous written consent, signed by a duly authorized officer or agent of the Member and delivered to the Secretary of this Corporation for filing in the corporate Minute Book. The voting rights of the Member include:~~

~~(a) The Member may appoint the greatest number of directors that constitute a minority of the board (the "Appointed Directors");~~

~~(b) Any Appointed Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by the Member. Any Elected Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by the majority of the Board of Directors;~~

~~(c) The changing of the number of Directors constituting the Board of Directors within the limitations prescribed in the Articles of Incorporation;~~

~~(d) The amendment or restatement of the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation or these Bylaws pursuant to Article 10 hereof;~~

~~(e) — The approval of the sale, lease, or other disposition (but not the mortgage, pledge, or grant of any security interest) of all, or substantially all, of the assets and property of the Corporation, the dissolution of the Corporation, or its merger with or consolidation into another corporation; and~~

~~(f) — Any other matter that the Directors may vote to submit for approval by the Member.~~

ARTICLE 3 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 3.1 General Powers. The activities of the Corporation shall be managed and controlled by a Board of Directors. All the corporate powers, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and in the laws of the State of Maine, shall be vested in and exercised by the Board of Directors.

Section 3.2 Qualifications. ~~At no time after August 31, 2012, shall more than 49% of the Directors be concurrently serving as a director of the Member, except as may result from a temporary vacancy on this Corporation's Board created by the resignation, death, incapacity, or removal of a Director.~~ No Director shall receive compensation for services provided as an employee of the Corporation while serving as a Director. At no time shall more than 49% of the Directors on the Board be "financially interested persons" as that term is defined by 13-B M.R.S.A. § 713-A, or any successor provision thereof.

Section 3.3 Number. The number of Directors constituting the Board of Directors shall be determined ~~by the Member~~ within the limits set forth in the Articles of Incorporation.

Commented [DWM4]: There is no provision for increasing/decreasing the number of directors in the Articles or By Laws.

Section 3.4 AppointmentElection; Term of Office.

An increase/decrease can be done by resolution of the Board, if the Articles authorize such resolution.

The appointment, election, and terms of office of the Directors shall be as follows:

Otherwise, the increase/decrease can be done by amendment of Bylaws or Articles.

~~(a) — The greatest number of Directors that constitute a minority of the Board (i.e., the Appointed Directors) shall be appointed by the Member.~~

(a) ~~The remaining~~ Directors ("~~Elected Directors~~") shall be elected by the ~~Corporation's~~ Board ~~from among nominees selected by the Member.~~ Board seats for ~~Elected~~ Directors whose terms have expired shall be filled annually ~~from among such nominees~~ by a majority vote of the Board at the annual meeting.

- (b) Except as otherwise provided herein, each Director shall hold office for a term of three (3) years or until the Director's successor has been elected ~~or appointed~~ and installed. Each new Director shall assume his or her Board position immediately upon adjournment of the annual meeting during which he or she was elected or appointed. The terms of office of ~~the Appointed~~ Directors shall be established in such a manner that one-third (as nearly as may be) of the ~~Appointed~~ Directors' terms expire at each annual meeting. ~~Similarly, the terms of office of the Elected Directors shall be established in such a manner that one third (as nearly as may be) of the Elected Directors' terms expire at each annual meeting.~~ To accomplish this, ~~the Member may assign one or more Appointed Directors to a term shorter than three (3) years, and the Board may assign one or more Elected Directors to a term shorter than three (3) years by random drawing or similar means.~~
- (c) No Director shall serve more than two (2) consecutive 3-year terms in addition to any 1-year or 2-year terms that may be established so that one third (as nearly as may be) of the Directors' terms expire at each annual meeting.. For any Director who has served two consecutive 3-year terms, he/she shall not be eligible for reappointment or reelection until the second annual meeting held after the annual meeting marking the conclusion of his/her term (i.e., approximately two years). For purposes of this provision, a Director who resigns from the Board during his or her term shall be deemed to have served two (2) full terms.

Section 3.5 Vacancies.

~~Any vacancy on the Board of Directors created by the resignation, death, incapacity, or removal of an Appointed Director or by an increase in the number of Appointed Directors may be filled by the Member for the unexpired portion of the term. Any vacancy occurring in the seat of an Elected Director~~ A vacancy on the Board of Directors occurs upon the resignation, death, incapacity, removal, including a vacancy created by an or an increase in the number of Elected Directors. ~~A vacancy shall may be filled by affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining Directors, even if less than a quorum), for the unexpired portion of the term. If any Director is appointed or elected to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term, the unexpired portion of the term he/she is filling shall not count toward the term limits imposed by Section 3.4. At no time may the appointment of a Director by the Member to fill a vacancy cause the Appointed Directors to constitute a majority of Board.~~

Commented [DWM5]: Maybe strike. It could be difficult to determine a Director's capacity and it might require a process for the Board to declare a vacancy. An incapacitated Director could resign voluntarily or the Board could remove the Director.

Commented [DWM6]: I read this to require a majority of all remaining directors, not just a majority of the remaining directors present and voting.

Commented [DWM7]: Not needed because of how Quorum is defined in 3.11 as a majority of Directors in office.

Section 3.6 Annual Meeting of Directors.

The annual meeting of Directors shall be held on or before June 30th of each year at a time and place determined by the Board of Directors to elect ~~Elected~~ Directors to replace those whose terms are expiring, ~~to fill vacant seats of Elected Directors,~~ to elect officers, and to transact other corporate business.

Commented [DWM8]: Vacancies can be filled throughout the year.

Section 3.7 Regular Meetings. The Board of Directors may provide by resolution the time and place for the holding of regular meetings without other notice of such resolution. The Board shall hold regular meetings no less frequently than quarterly.

Section 3.8 Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Board Chair or if the Board Chair is absent or unable to act, by the Board Vice-Chair, or if both the Board Chair and the Board Vice-Chair are absent or unable to act, by the Secretary, and must be called on the written request of any two Directors.

Section 3.9 Notice of Meetings. Notice of any special meeting shall be given by mailing written notice at least three (3) days before the meeting or by telephone at least one (1) day before the meeting. Notice of a meeting need not be given to any Director who signs a waiver of notice either before or after the meeting. Neither the business to be transacted nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of the meeting. Attendance of a Director at a meeting shall constitute waiver of notice of such meeting, unless the Director attends the meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. To the extent required by law, notice of meetings shall be provided to the public or, in the event of an emergency meeting, to local representatives of the media.

Section 3.10 Chair. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the Board Chair, or in his/her absence, the Board Vice Chair, shall preside. If neither the Board Chair nor Board Vice Chair are available, the Directors shall choose a Director to preside.

Section 3.11 Quorum. A majority of the Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors, and the act of a majority of the Directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by statute, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws.

Section 3.12 Unanimous Action of Directors Without a Meeting. Any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors or by a committee of the Directors may be taken without a meeting if all of the Directors or all of the members of the committee, as the case may be, sign written consents setting forth the action taken or to be taken, at any time before or after the intended effective date of

such action. Such consents shall be filed with the minutes of Directors' meetings and shall have the same effect as a unanimous vote.

Section 3.13 Attendance at Meetings. Regular attendance at Board meetings in person is expected of all Directors. A Director who has four (4) consecutive unexcused absences from Board meetings shall be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from the Board. With prior approval of the Board Chair, or in his/her absence, the Secretary, Directors may participate in Director meetings of the Board of Directors via conference call or similar mechanism by which each Director can hear and be heard by all those present. To the extent required by law, Director meetings shall be open to attendance by the public.

Section 3.14 Removal. Any ~~Appointed Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by the Member.~~ Any ~~Elected~~ Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by ~~the~~ a majority vote of all of the Board of Directors ~~then in office.~~

Commented [DWM9]: I read this as requiring a majority vote of Directors present and voting. Query whether removal should require a majority of the full Board, or majority of all directors currently on the Board. Or a supermajority.

Commented [DWM10R9]: 9/15/2022 revised

ARTICLE 4 – COMMITTEES

Section 4.1 Designation. The Board of Directors, by a resolution adopted by a majority of the full Board of Directors, may designate such committees as the Board deems appropriate or necessary.

Section 4.2 Committee Members. Members of any committee of the Corporation shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Except as otherwise specified in these Bylaws or expressly determined by the Board, the Board Chair shall appoint the membership of committees. Each committee may prescribe rules and regulations for the call and conduct of committee meetings, and each committee shall maintain minutes of its meetings and other records appropriate to its purposes and shall make regular reports to the Directors as and when requested by the Board Chair.

ARTICLE 5 – OFFICERS

Section 5.1 Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall consist of a Board Chair, a Board Vice-Chair, a Head of School, a Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~, a Secretary, and such other officers and assistant officers as the Board of Directors shall deem desirable. No two offices may be held by the

same person. In addition to the duties and powers specifically set forth in these Bylaws, each officer shall have such duties and power as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe.

Section 5.2 Election and Term of Office. The officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting, or as soon thereafter as convenient and each officer then holding an elective office shall continue to hold said office or offices until his or her successor shall have been duly elected.

Section 5.3 Qualifications. The Board Chair, Board Vice -Chair, and Secretary shall be elected from among the Directors of the Corporation.

Section 5.4 Vacancies. A vacancy in any office caused by death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5.5 Chair of the Finance Committee. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall have the oversight of all financial affairs of the Corporation.

Section 5.6 Treasurer/Director of Finance. The Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ shall have the powers and authority of the treasurer of a non profit corporation under ~~Section 710 of~~ the Maine Nonprofit Corporations Act. Subject to the direction of the Board, the Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~, shall have general charge of the financial affairs of the Corporation. The Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ shall have custody of all funds of the Corporation, subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Board. The Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ may be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board may require. The Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys of the Corporation in such depositories as may be designated by the Board. The Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ shall keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of the receipts and disbursements of the Corporation in suitable books of the Corporation and shall exhibit such books upon request of any officer or Director for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

Section 5.7 Secretary. The Secretary shall have charge of such books, documents, and papers as the Board of Directors may determine and shall have the custody of the corporate seal. The Secretary shall attend and keep or cause to be kept the minutes of all the meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a record of the names and addresses of the Board of Directors. The Secretary may certify all votes, resolutions, and actions of the Board of Directors and of its committees.

Section 5.8 Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair. The Board Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall have such other powers and responsibilities as set forth in these Bylaws. If the Board Chair is unable to preside, the Vice Chair shall preside and have all the powers vested in the Chair.

Section 5.9 Head of School. The Head of School shall have such authority and responsibilities as designated by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 6 - INDEMNIFICATION

Section 6.1 Indemnity. The Corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, by reason of the fact that that person is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, trustee, partner, fiduciary, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorneys fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by that person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding; provided that no indemnification shall be provided for any person with respect to any matter as to which that person has been finally adjudicated not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that that person's action was in the best interests of the Corporation or, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, to have had reasonable cause to believe that that person's conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order or conviction adverse to such person, or by settlement or plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not of itself create a presumption that such person did not act in good faith in the reasonable belief that such person's action was in the best interests of the Corporation and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that such person's conduct was unlawful.

Section 6.2 Indemnity Against Expenses. To the extent that a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any such action, suit or proceeding, or in the defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, that Director, officer, employee or agent shall be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys fees, actually and reasonably incurred by that Director, officer, employee or agent in connection therewith.

Commented [DWM11]: 13-B MRS 710(1):

The officers of a corporation shall consist of a president, a secretary or clerk, a treasurer and such other officers and assistant officers as may be deemed necessary,

13-B MRS 102(10) defines "president":

"President" means the chief executive officer by whatever name known.

MeANS does not need a president by that title, but it needs an officer to be designated as the CEO and function as the president. This will clarify how statutory references to "president" will apply to MeANS.

Section 6.3 Determination. Any indemnification shall be made by the Corporation only as authorized in the specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the Director, officer, employee or agent is proper under the circumstances and in the best interest of the Corporation. That determination shall be made by the Board of Directors by majority vote of a quorum consisting of Directors who are not parties to that action, suit or proceeding, or if such a quorum is not obtainable, or even if obtainable, if a quorum of disinterested Directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

Section 6.4 Payment of Expenses. Expenses incurred in defending a civil, criminal, administrative or investigative action, suit or proceeding may be authorized and paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition of that action, suit or proceeding upon a determination made in accordance with the procedure established in the foregoing section that, based on the facts then known to those making the determination and without further investigation, the person seeking indemnification satisfied the standard of conduct provided herein, upon receipt by the Corporation of a written undertaking by or on behalf of the officer, Director, employee or agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that the person is entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation as authorized in this Article.

Section 6.5 Insurance. By action of the Board of Directors, notwithstanding any interest of the Directors in the action, the Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance, in such amounts as the Board of Directors deems appropriate, on behalf of any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another organization, against any liability asserted against such person and incurred by such person in any such capacity or arising out of his/her status as such, whether or not the Corporation would have the power or would be required to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of this Article 6 or of the laws of the State of Maine.

ARTICLE 7 - CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, GIFTS

Section 7.1 Contracts. The Board of Directors, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may authorize any officer or agent to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance; and unless so authorized by the Board of Directors, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit, or render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or to any amount.

Commented [DWM12]: Just FYI, the president has statutory authority to make contracts.

13-B M.R.S. 710(2). Authority to make contracts. Unless they have reason to believe otherwise, persons dealing with a corporation are entitled to assume that its president has authority to make, on its behalf, all contracts which are within the ordinary course of those activities in which the corporation is already engaged.

The Bylaws do not allow the president to make contracts without Board authorization.

Section 7.2 Checks. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer/~~Director of Finance~~ and countersigned by the Board Chair.

Section 7.3 Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

Section 7.4 Gifts. The Board of Directors may accept, on behalf of the Corporation, any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 8 - BOOKS AND RECORDS

Article 8.1 The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of all accounts and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors, which book, records, and minutes shall be kept by the Secretary of the Board of Directors. Such records shall be kept at the registered office of the Corporation, or other place designated by the Board of Directors. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any officer, Director, or their agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE 9 - NONPROFIT STATUS

Section 9.1 Prohibition Against Sharing in Corporate Earnings. No Director, officer, or employee of, or member of a committee of, or person connected with the Corporation, or any other private individual shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operations of the Corporation, provided, that this shall not prevent the payment to any such person of such reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Corporation in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the Board of Directors; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets upon the dissolution of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENTS

Section 10.1 Amendment. Only the ~~Member-Board of Directors~~ shall have power to amend the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, and to make, amend, and repeal the Bylaws of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 11 - DISSOLUTION

Section 11.1 Manner of Dissolution. The Corporation may be dissolved ~~only with the Member's consent. Upon the Member's adoption of a resolution approving dissolution, the Corporation shall proceed to dissolve~~ in accordance with the Maine Nonprofit Corporation Act, the Articles of Incorporation, and these Bylaws.

Section 11.2 Disposition of Assets. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, transfer and convey any remaining property and assets of the Corporation ~~to the Member if the Member is at such time engaged in activities substantially similar to those of this Corporation (within the meaning of 13-B M.R.S.A. Section 407) and qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. If the Member is not engaged in such substantially similar activities and qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3), all remaining assets~~ shall be distributed exclusively to one or more nonprofit organizations which may be selected by the Directors as an appropriate recipient of such assets, as long as each of such organizations shall be engaged in such substantially similar activities and qualify as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Notwithstanding the foregoing, remaining funds shall be paid to the State of Maine exclusively for public purposes to the extent required by 20-A M.R.S.A. Section 2411(8) or successor provision thereof.

Commented [DWM13]: Need to amend Exhibit D of the Articles similarly

ARTICLE 12 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Section 12.1 Definition of Conflict-of-Interest Transaction. For purposes of this Article 12, a conflict-of-interest transaction is a transaction in which a Director or officer of the Corporation has a direct or indirect financial interest. For purposes of this Article 12, a Director or Officer has an indirect financial interest in a transaction if:

(a) Another entity in which the Director or officer has a material interest or in which the Director or officer is a general partner (or the functional equivalent thereto) is a party to the transaction; or

(b) Another entity of which the Director or officer is a director, officer, or trustee is a party to the transaction.

Section 12.2 Approval of Conflict of Interest Transactions. A conflict-of-interest transaction may be approved before or after consummation of the transaction as follows: The Board of Directors of the Corporation or a committee of the Board with authority may authorize, approve or ratify the transaction if the material facts of the transaction and the director's or officer's interest are disclosed or known to the Board or the authorized committee of the Board. The transaction may be approved only if it is fair and equitable to the Corporation as of the date the transaction is authorized, approved or ratified. The party asserting fairness of any such transaction has the burden of establishing fairness. For purposes of this section, a conflict-of-interest transaction is approved if it receives the affirmative vote of a majority of the Directors on the Board of Directors or on an authorized committee of the Board who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction, but a transaction may not be approved by a single director. If a majority of the Directors on the Board who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction vote to approve the transaction, a quorum is present for the purpose of taking action under this section.

Section 12.3 General Policy and Procedures Concerning Conflicts of Interest. Attached hereto and incorporated herein is **Schedule 12.3 (General Policy and Procedures for Conflicts of Interest)**. The policy and procedures set forth in Schedule 12.3 supplement the more specific provisions contained in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 above. At all times all Directors, officers, and other representatives or agents of the Corporation shall be subject to and shall comply with the general policies and procedures set forth in Schedule 12.3, and as applicable, the more specific procedures set forth in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 above.

SCHEDULE 12.3

GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Article I - Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt corporation's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or Director of the Corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace the provisions of Sections 12.1 and 12.2 of the Bylaws. To the extent Sections 12.1 and 12.2 apply to any transaction, the procedures set forth therein shall be followed. In all other cases, the following applies.

Article II - Definitions

1. Interested Person. Any Director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Board or Board designated committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III - Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of committees, if any, with governing Board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.

a. An interested person may make a presentation at the Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

b. The chair of the Board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

c. After exercising due diligence, the Board or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors or committee members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

a. If the Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board or committee determines the person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV - Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the Board and all committees with Board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V - Compensation

- a. A voting member of the Board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI - Annual Statements

Each Director, Officer and member of a committee with governing Board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands the Corporation is charitable and, in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII - Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII - Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

Coversheet

New Governing Board Members

Section: X. 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 (Mary Torsch).pdf

Public Charter School Governing Board Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School: Acadia Academy

Name of Board Member: Mary Torsch

Email Address: mmorrissey@sta-law.com

Occupation: Attorney

Please respond to the following questions:

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

I want to serve on the governing board because I believe in the power of education to transform lives and strengthen communities. As someone who recently moved to the Lewiston/Auburn area, I see it as my responsibility to become actively involved in supporting and uplifting this community. Serving on the Board is a meaningful way for me to contribute my skills, values, and passion where they can have a lasting impact.

Education is important to me and my family. I hold a master's degree in education, and my partner is a teacher at Lewiston High School. We are both deeply invested in educational equity, innovation, and student success. I am especially interested in Acadia Academy's mission of developing the whole child through rigorous academics and experiential learning. The emphasis on accountability, community, and real-world application aligns closely with my educational philosophy.

Finally, I hope some day that my three year old daughter, Lavender, will attend Acadia Academy. I want to help shape the kind of school that she—and her future peers—can grow in, namely one that challenges them academically, supports them emotionally, and nurtures their sense of purpose and belonging.

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

I am not familiar with the particular demographics of Acadia Academy, but through my partner's work at Lewiston High School and my work with clients in the Lewiston-Auburn area, I am familiar with the pool in which Acadia Academy draws from. Lewiston Public Schools have significant immigrant populations and about 1/3 of their population is black students. This diversity brings incredible richness, but also calls for responsive, inclusive educational approaches that recognize

and support a wide range of cultural backgrounds, language needs, and lived experiences. I think experiential learning can be a very powerful tool in allowing students to make meaningful connections between their learning and their lives or developing empathy with respect to their neighbors and friends who may come from a different background.

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

N/A

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

As a lawyer with a background in gender and cultural studies, and experience consulting for the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, I bring a thoughtful understanding of policy, governance, and student well-being to the board. My expertise can support Acadia in maintaining their mission, while also making strategic and sometimes difficult decisions to ensure the school maintains its profitability and its operating in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

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

I used to work with Amy Dieterich while she was a practicing attorney, she was able to provide me with information that aided in my understanding of the role I could play as a public charter school board member. It is my understanding that as a board member, I (along with other board members) am responsible for overseeing the functions and operations of the school in accordance with the board's bylaws.

Sign: Mary Torsch

Date October, 24th 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.