



Maine Charter School Commission

School Performance Committee Meeting

Published on October 6, 2026 at 11:37 AM EDT

Date and Time

Monday October 5, 2026 at 9:00 AM EDT

Location

Zoom

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter
I. Opening Items		
A. Record Attendance		Amy Allen
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Tom Keller
II. Agenda Items - To be Voted On		
A. To Consider the Approval of the Minutes from the 9/1/26 Committee Meeting	Vote	Tom Keller
III. Agenda Items - For Discussion		
A. Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Recommendation	Discuss	Lana Ewing

	Purpose	Presenter
B. Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Renewal Recommendation	Discuss	Lana Ewing

IV. Updates / FYIs / Reminders

- *Fiddlehead's potential move away from their middle school.*
- *The October 13th Commission Meeting will be held in the Fireside Lounge at the University of Maine at Augusta (46 University Drive, Augusta) beginning at 10:00am.*

V. Upcoming School Performance Committee Meetings

November 3, 2026

- 9:00-10:00am
- Zoom

December

- NO MEETING

January 5, 2027

- 9:00-10:00am
- Zoom

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting	FYI	Tom Keller
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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 Minutes from the 9/1/26 Committee Meeting

Section:	II. Agenda Items - To be Voted On
Item:	A. To Consider the Approval of the Minutes from the 9/1/26 Committee
Meeting	
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	DRAFT School Performance Committee Minutes - 9.1.26.pdf



Maine Charter School Commission

School Performance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 1, 2026

Time: 9:00-10:00am

Location: Zoom

Members present: Tom Keller, Jim Handy, Vicky Cohen

Members absent: None

Staff present: Lana Ewing, Amy Allen

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The Chair called the meeting to order. Staff explained the new requirement that the Committee take meeting minutes, noting that it was implemented to comply with public instrumentality standards and audit requirements.

The Committee approved the minutes of the August 4, 2026 meeting. *On a motion by Vicky Cohen, seconded by Jim Handy, the Committee voted unanimously by a show of hands to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2026 meeting.*

Staff outlined the two main agenda items for the meeting: a deep dive into the Panorama survey results and an update on the opening of Moxie Public Schools.

2. Panorama Survey Deep Dive

Staff presented a deep dive on the Panorama survey, which measures school climate as required by the charter contract. The survey window runs from mid-March to mid-June and measures three groups: families, students (surveyed separately in grades 3–5 and grades 6–12), and teachers and staff.

Staff reviewed the scoring framework. Schools are expected to achieve the 50th percentile or higher relative to nationally similar schools, with comparison groups built on factors including the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, urban location, and grade span. Panorama has transitioned to an enhanced reporting system that adds school size and region to the comparison categories.

The Committee discussed the difficulty of collecting data on economically disadvantaged students in Maine following the implementation of universal free meals. Staff explained that although the collection process is imperfect, schools still report economically disadvantaged percentages as part of certification, which affects Title I funding allocations.

Staff reviewed the participation thresholds in the performance framework, which require 35 percent family participation and 75 percent participation among students, teachers, and staff for a school to meet expectations.

Staff reported that all nine schools met participation thresholds across every stakeholder group for the first time, and that six of nine schools met or exceeded framework expectations for every stakeholder group. Results included repeated scores at the 99th percentile across the portfolio.

A member raised the subjectivity of self-reported data, noting that responses can vary with a respondent's mood or the time available to complete the survey. Staff acknowledged the inherent subjectivity while noting that the survey platform and question design are intended to produce reliable data, and suggested more frequent check-ins for schools that fall short with a particular stakeholder group. The Committee discussed targeting the three schools that fell short in one or more groups for more frequent monitoring, potentially as part of their October action plans.

Staff reviewed year-over-year results school by school. Gains were reported at ACADIA Academy, which moved from approaching or not meeting standards to exceeding them, and at Fiddlehead, which improved performance in the upper grades. Staff identified Maine Arts Academy as an area of concern due to declining family and teacher satisfaction scores and confirmed that staff are working with the school on an action plan.

Staff reported that feedback and coaching is the lowest-scoring area across the portfolio, with four of nine schools performing below the 50th percentile. Some schools are making progress through creative coaching structures that use deans of curriculum and department heads.

The Committee discussed using the data to plan professional development. Staff explained that feedback from Panorama and from the schools has been incorporated into the professional development design for school leaders through the Accelerate partnership. A member offered to assist with math coaching and workshop development, particularly for grades K–5. Staff noted that the Commission must be careful about direct delivery of professional development and that any such support would be optional rather than required.

Staff demonstrated the new Panorama reporting platform, including how schools access and analyze their data, compare results against national benchmarks, and receive improvement strategies through the Panorama Playbook. The Committee discussed the distinction between percentile rankings and raw percentage data.

Schools are required to submit action plans in October. Staff will share the deep dive slides and the action plan template with the Committee.

3. MOXIE Public Schools — Opening Update

Staff reported that MOXIE Public Schools opened as scheduled with 131 students enrolled, exceeding the school's enrollment goal. Staff shared photographs of the facility.

Staff reported on the pre-opening facility walkthrough and confirmed that the facility passed all required inspections, including fire marshal, ADA compliance, and health requirements. The school is still seeking one additional bus driver.

Staff will ask the school whether automated external defibrillators are available in the building.

4. Legislative Initiatives

The Committee discussed a legislative initiatives document that was visible in a state department meeting room. A member explained that the department typically keeps its legislative priorities confidential, and that the document raised questions regarding charter school issues. Staff will follow up with the department to learn more about the legislative review process.

5. Upcoming Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting will be held at Maine Virtual Academy in Augusta at 10:00 a.m., with a facility tour offered by the school. Staff will send the meeting packet, including tour and schedule details.

The Committee discussed holding a future Commission meeting at MOXIE Public Schools. Because of scheduling conflicts in October, the Committee agreed to consider November.

Votes taken:

- Approval of the August 4, 2026 minutes — moved by Vicky Cohen, seconded by Jim Handy; approved unanimously.

Adjournment: 10:15am

Minutes prepared by: Amy Lynn Allen

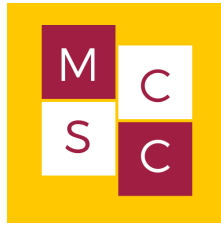
Minutes approved: [date]

DRAFT

Coversheet

Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Recommendation

Section:	III. Agenda Items - For Discussion
Item:	A. Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Recommendation
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	CRCS_Renewal_Recommendation_Final.pdf



MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

182 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0182 | www.mainecharterschoolcommission.org

Charter Renewal Recommendation

Community Regional Charter School

Cornville and Skowhegan, Maine · PreK–12 · Opened 2012

RECOMMENDATION

Renew for a five-year term, with conditions

Two conditions are set out in Section 6: heightened oversight, and annual Performance Framework milestones.

Submitted to	Members of the Maine Charter School Commission
Submitted by	The Renewal Review Team
Date	September 21, 2026
Statutory authority	20-A M.R.S. §2411; MCSC Rule Chapter 3 (90-668)
Application filed	September 4, 2026
Renewal site visit	September 10, 2026
Public hearing	September 24, 2026
Commission vote	October 13, 2026 — 39 days after filing, within the 45-day statutory window

Renewal Review Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

This recommendation is the Review Team's consensus advice to the Commission. It is not the Commission's decision, which rests with a vote of the Commission at its October 13, 2026 Business Meeting. A draft of this recommendation will be provided to the school on September 28, 2026 with a 48-hour review period.

DRAFT

1. The Recommendation

The Renewal Review Team recommends that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of Community Regional Charter School for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027 and ending June 30, 2032, subject to the two conditions set out in Section 6 of this report.

The Team recommends a standard five-year term rather than an extended term. A term longer than five years is available under 20-A M.R.S. §2411 where performance warrants it. CRCS's performance does not yet warrant it: mathematics has been rated Not Meeting in every rated year of the term, chronic absenteeism has been rated Not Meeting in all four years, and the school is closing a Level 2 Intervention Plan on which it met its reading and attendance goals but missed its mathematics and persistence goals. A five-year term with conditions gives the school the stability needed to engage in long-term commitments while keeping focus on the Commission's next full review.

The two conditions:

1. The first is an oversight arrangement: four quarterly meetings with the school on the Performance Framework. One of them is conducted as an expanded mid-year site visit, with a campus walkthrough and classroom observations at all three campuses, in addition to a meeting with school leaders and the school board. A second round of classroom observations at all three campuses is attached to another of the quarterly meetings, and a separate end-of-year meeting closes each year.
2. The second is a five-year schedule of annual milestones on every framework indicator where the Commission has a concern, backmapped from a Year 5 position in which CRCS is rated Meeting or better across all of them.

Suggested motion

Moved, that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of Community Regional Charter School for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2027 and concluding June 30, 2032, subject to the two conditions set forth in Section 6 of the Renewal Recommendation; that the conditions take effect upon this vote and be incorporated into the renewed charter contract to be reviewed and signed no later than June 30, 2027.

2. Evidence Considered

Consistent with 20-A M.R.S. §2411, this recommendation is grounded in evidence of the school's performance over the charter term, measured against the Performance Framework and the charter contract. It is not grounded in promises of future improvement. The school's plans for the next term are relevant to the design of conditions; they are not the basis for the renewal decision.

Evidence	What it contributed
Year 4 Performance Report (June 30, 2026)	Four-year record against the Performance Framework across academic, financial, and organizational indicators.
Level 2 Intervention Letter (January 27, 2026)	The Commission's formal designation of CRCS at Level 2, the improvement goals adopted with it, and the Intervention Protocol under which any future escalation would proceed.

Evidence	What it contributed
Level 2 Intervention Plan results (August 5, 2026)	Measured outcomes against the two-year plan goals for proficiency, growth, chronic absenteeism, and persistence, Spring 2024 baseline through Spring 2026.
Momentum Strategy & Research final report (August 2026)	Independent evaluation drawing on four years of CRCS roster data and three years of state outcome data, including rural and remote peer comparisons, Conditional Growth Percentile analysis, and the relationship between growth and proficiency.
Renewal Application (filed September 4, 2026)	The school's supplemental evidence, its own account of improvements undertaken, its proposed mathematics conditions, and its plans and financial projections for the next term.
CRCS Mathematics Action Plan (September 2026)	The school's proposed mathematics conditions, action plan, and SMART goals, with a Spring 2027 proficiency target covering both campuses.
Renewal Site Visit Report (visit September 10, 2026)	Classroom observations across two campuses and focus groups with administration, the governing board, facilitators (teachers), students, and families.
Historical record of the charter term	Administration, board, and document-review visits in Years 11–13; the Year 14 end-of-year visit; the August 12, 2026 on-site end-of-year visit; quarterly intervention reporting.
Public testimony	Comments from community members, students, and staff at the September 24, 2026 public hearing, to be considered by the Commission before it votes.

3. What the Record Shows

Strengths

Area	Evidence over the term
Reading	NWEA MAP reading proficiency rose 44% to 57% (+13 points) against a +10-point intervention target; reading growth rose 35% to 54% (+19 points) against a +5-point target, with every subgroup except IEP meeting or exceeding the growth target. Overman reading growth moved from 31% (Not Meeting) to 46% (Meeting). The proficiency target was met at the overall level; three of four subgroups — male (+8), IEP (+8), and economically disadvantaged (+6) learners — gained less than the +10 points the plan sought.
Graduation and college readiness	Four-year graduation rate Exceeding in all four years: 92%, 94%, 97%, and 96% (27 of 28 students). Accuplacer reading reached 90% and math 83% in SY2025–26.
School climate and family engagement	Panorama family results Exceeding since SY2023–24, with family participation at 81%. Dimensions student climate moved from Not Meeting to the 90th percentile for climate and teacher–student relationships. Families described excellent communication and partnership. Overman student results continued to meet or exceed every required scale but declined from exceptionally high SY2024–25 levels, and the school has said it will monitor to prevent further decline.
Attendance trajectory	Both academies beat their 2-year intervention targets: chronic absenteeism at Dimensions moved 33.3% to 27% of students, and Overman from 47.8% to 39%, a

Area	Evidence over the term
	significant move in the right direction at both schools. Progress was steady across the two-year window rather than a late spike.
Financial management	Balanced budgets and clean independent audits in every year of the term. Low risk on 6 of 8 financial framework metrics in FY25, with moderate risk on days cash on hand and on the three-year total margin. FY26 fourth-quarter financials place enrollment variance in the high-risk range, which is addressed below as a specific concern. An active Finance Committee that models scenarios against the budget before decisions are made.
Mission fidelity	Mission and Key Design Implementation rated Meeting across the entire term. Mission comprehension was consistent and deep across every stakeholder group in the renewal site visit.

Concerns that support conditions

The conditions in Section 6 rest on the below concerns.

1. Mathematics

Academic Proficiency — Math has been rated Not Meeting in every rated year of the charter term. Under the Level 2 plan adopted in January 2026, mathematics proficiency rose 8 points against a 10-point target, moving 33% to 41%. Mathematics growth moved in the opposite direction: down 11 points against a +5-point target, from 39% to 28%, and down on every subgroup line — female learners –17, economically disadvantaged –15, IEP –9, male –5. Proficiency for IEP learners was flat at 22% across the two years; for economically disadvantaged learners it fell 2 points to 34%. At the campus level, Dimensions mathematics growth fell from 53% (Meeting) to 30% (Not Meeting) while Overman improved from 32% to 37% and remains below Meeting. The school reports SY2025–26 mathematics proficiency at 23% overall at Dimensions and 25% at Overman. The customized measure of NWEA growth within one standard deviation, rated Meeting in earlier years, fell to 45% at Dimensions and 50% at Overman. Momentum’s peer analysis places Dimensions grades 6–8 mathematics proficiency at 0% and finds some special-education subgroups at 0% proficiency at both campuses — below their peers at comparable schools.

During the site visit, in the mathematics lesson the Team observed, instruction was direct, the teacher held the knowledge, learners were quiet, but visibly disengaged, and only four of eleven indicated understanding when asked. Across the ten classrooms observed on two campuses, differentiation — the mechanism by which an ungraded school delivers mathematics at each learner’s readiness level — was largely absent; in several rooms every learner completed the same worksheet regardless of level. Leadership described two mathematics pathways geared to learner level, and the renewal application describes RIT-band data being used to group learners for mathematics within learner-chosen seminars at Overman. Every stakeholder group described that design accurately, but it was not visible in the rooms the Team entered. Average facilitator experience is under three years, class sizes are near 23, there is no curriculum coordinator, and mathematics coaching was reported to the Team to be informal rather than systematic.

Why this supports a condition. The data show a subject that has not moved in four years and that moved backward during a period when the school was formally accountable for improving it. The instructional conditions that produce movement in mathematics — tasks matched to readiness, cognitive demand placed on the learner rather than the teacher, checks for understanding that change what happens next — were not reliably present during the site visit observations.

2. Growth that does not reach proficiency

Momentum Strategy & Research¹ found that CRCS learners in state-tested grades typically begin the year in the low average range — the 21st to 40th percentile — and that new learners arrive with skills essentially comparable to continuing learners, so incoming enrollment is not the cause. Average fall-to-spring Conditional Growth Percentiles hover near the 40th percentile, just below the average growth band of the 41st to 60th. Because roughly 72% of learners re-enroll year to year, most are exposed to that rate for several consecutive years. Growth at the 40th percentile holds a gap roughly constant; it does not close one.

The Team regards engagement as a leading indicator of growth, and the Team observed inconsistent engagement during the site visit. Across many of the classrooms observed, a meaningful share of learners was not engaged in the thinking work of the lesson — passive opting out at the high school level, some fully off task at the elementary level. In a social studies lesson, note-taking was optional and only two or three learners took notes. In one upper-elementary classroom roughly half of learners appeared on task, and two the reviewer spoke with could not describe what they were working on.

CRCS's growth is not sufficient for its learners given their proficiency status. The expectation for the next term should be a rate of growth that closes the gap rather than maintains it, expressed in measures that account for where learners start. Section 9 recommends the Commission adopt the Conditional Growth Percentile indicator the school has itself proposed for that purpose and/or commission Momentum to do an analysis that will project yearly growth needed to meet proficiency targets.

3. Chronic absenteeism, particularly at Overman and in the high school grades

Chronic Absenteeism has been rated Not Meeting in all four years of the term. The district trajectory is good — 42.3%, 35.8%, 33.8%, and 33% preliminary — and both campuses beat their intervention targets, Dimensions moving 33.3% to 29% and Overman 47.8% to 40%. Overman drives the district rate. Momentum found Overman's rates more than 10 percentage points worse than four of five peer comparison groups across every subgroup, with Overman learners who have IEPs at 46% — second highest in the entire comparison set, behind only rural and town alternative schools. Approximately 75% of CRCS learners come from Somerset County, where chronic absenteeism runs near 32%.

Attendance is an indicator where CRCS has already proved it can move a hard number, so this is not a new demand but the continuation of a trajectory to the point where the indicator is met.

4. Enrollment, persistence, and the financial plan built on them

October 1 counts moved 358, 381, 385, and 373 across the term. Enrollment was approximately 330 at the September 10 site visit and 340 as reported in the application filed September 4, against a contracted enrollment of 352 plus/minus 10%. Withdrawals rose 107 to 112 to 124 against an intervention target of 95 or fewer — the plan's clearest miss, and the only goal that moved the wrong way in every year. Year-to-year re-enrollment is approximately 72% (preliminary), and nearly 68% of SY2025–26 departures occurred before the school year began or by the end of October. FY26 financials place Enrollment Variance in the high-risk range. The FY27–FY29 budget the board approved on June 10, 2026 assumes the learner population grows to reach the capacity of the current facilities.

During the School Board focus group on the site visit day, the Team learned that the board is planning against the enrollment concern deliberately: the Finance Committee is modeling scenarios against the budget so that the financial implications of each option are known in advance, has conducted a cost analysis of the in-house kitchen, and has modeled the staffing implications of operating three buildings vs. two. Decisions are sequenced to real data — the

¹ MCSC engaged Momentum Strategy & Research in April 2026 for an independent read on CRCS's academic picture. Dr. Jody Ernst analyzed three years of NWEA MAP data to answer four questions: whether longer-enrolled students show stronger outcomes; how far behind students arrive and whether incoming deficits explain state test results despite moderately strong MAP performance; whether a combined growth-and-achievement metric gives a clearer picture; and how CRCS compares to similar rural and alternative schools.

October 1 certified count, a board decision window at the end of October, and February allotment information. Board members were explicit that these decisions involve staff jobs and family stability and that they want to plan early rather than react late. The Team also heard the retention reasons directly: transportation distance across a catchment of more than 40 towns, and a new Pre-K program offered locally in Skowhegan.

Why this supports a condition. Enrollment is the school's principal financial exposure. It is also an academic variable: Momentum found that learners enrolled longer show modestly better achievement and attendance in PK–5, so churn costs learning as well as revenue.

5. Classroom implementation of the ungraded model

This is principally a site-visit finding, and it is the finding that connects the others. Differentiation was described accurately and independently by leadership, facilitators, learners, families, and the board as the core of the model. In the ten classrooms observed across two campuses it was largely absent; in several, every learner completed the same worksheet or activity regardless of level. Behavioral expectations were not consistent across classrooms or campuses: the Team saw redirection issued and not followed through. The learning coach role — a named element of the model — was identified by school leadership as lacking documentation and evidence of contact with learners.

As counterevidence the Team observed elements of the mission in practice. The Food Science and Culinary Arts classroom showed learners engaged in genuinely different tasks at different stages, with templates provided for recipe creation and reflection and all learners purposefully occupied. Early literacy instruction at Dimensions showed four differentiated activity groups, visible Science of Reading practice, an adult working one-to-one on letter sounds, and clear physical organization of the space. In a world cultures lesson the facilitator conferenced individually with learners during independent work and redirected off-task technology promptly. Integrated course design — forensic science combining algebra and chemistry, poetry with structured prompts — reflects creativity in curriculum construction. The problem that was observed is consistency.

Why this supports a condition. An ungraded, proficiency-based school is a promise about what happens in the room. Where that promise is not delivered consistently, many indicators are affected at once — proficiency, growth, engagement, attendance, and retention. This is why Condition 1 places Commission staff in CRCS classrooms twice annually rather than relying on documents alone.

6. Instructional support capacity

Average facilitator experience is under three years, against class sizes around 23. There is no curriculum coordinator; curriculum support is provided by a building principal in addition to their other duties, in a school where facilitators build curriculum from scratch. Professional development access differs by campus — facilitators at Dimensions described being sent to conferences geared to their practice, while Overman staff reported fewer opportunities and described relying on peer support in the absence of other resources. Instructional coaching is reported as informal rather than systematic. Educational technician and custodial positions carry the highest turnover, and leadership identified difficulty recruiting experienced staff into support roles as a persistent constraint.

Leadership was candid that coaching new facilitators to teach well in this model is difficult, and that special education staffing must be adjusted in the first six to eight weeks of each year because the school cannot ask about IEP status at application. Facilitators describe latitude to design courses and take instructional risks, and cite that latitude as a primary reason they stay.

Why this supports a condition. The model requires more instructional expertise than a conventional one, and the staffing profile does not yet match that requirement.

7. Leadership sustainability and governance follow-through

The school board has strengthened during this term and the Team records that clearly: monthly data review, a standing Academic Excellence Committee reporting to the full board, structured goal setting through Board on Track, a first retreat with one-to-one interviews of every member, skills-based recruitment, and board training at 100%. The concerns are narrower and specific. There is no formal support structure for the leadership team itself and no systematic structure for instructional support or classroom-management coaching. The Executive Director's role spans organizational leadership, budgeting and grants, facilities, transportation, food service, enrollment, technology, strategic alignment, and portions of facilities construction and maintenance. The executive director evaluation policy exists but has not been consistently followed on timeline. Succession planning has not been taken up. Board strategic planning is currently concentrated in the Finance Committee's consolidation scenarios.

Board members raised most of this themselves. They noted that the current evaluation timeline would not work if the board needed to hire a new executive director, since that decision would have to be made by June, and they recently approved creating an Executive Committee to serve as the HR committee for the evaluation. An executive director evaluation survey distributed to all staff surfaced that staff did not consistently know who their supervisor was, and the board responded by requesting a written organizational chart. Board members were direct with the Team about where governance practice has been inconsistent.

Why this supports a condition. The organization depends heavily on its current leadership at exactly the moment it faces large decisions — campus configuration, enrollment recovery, and an academic turnaround in mathematics. Condition 1 requires that the governing board be in the room for the Commission's bi-annual reviews so that the board sees the same evidence the Commission sees at the same time.

4. Why Renewal With Conditions

Why not non-renewal

The statutory grounds for non-renewal are failure to comply with the charter statute, material violation of the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures of the charter contract, failure to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations in the contract, failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management, or violation of law. The record does not support any of them. CRCS is in compliance with its contract, is audit-clean with balanced budgets in every year of the term, and has made demonstrable progress on the concerns the Commission identified — reading, attendance, board practice, and school climate all moved materially in the right direction under the Level 2 plan. The school identified its own weakness in mathematics, adjusted practice mid-year, and produced measurable short-cycle improvement.

Why not renewal without conditions

Chronic absenteeism has been rated Not Meeting in all four years and mathematics proficiency in every year it was rated, and the school has now been under formal intervention twice — a Level 2 plan closed in SY2022–23 and a second closed in August 2026. Mathematics growth reversed across every subgroup during a period when the school was formally accountable for improving it. Enrollment is below the level on which the school's own three-year budget is built. And the renewal site visit found that the differentiation on which the entire model depends is not yet reliably delivered in classrooms. Renewing on those facts without conditions would leave the Commission without a sufficient method to intervene short of the next renewal.

How these conditions have been designed

The Commission specifies the outcome and the date. Every milestone in Condition 2 is an output the Commission already measures through the Performance Framework, set annually for five years and backmapped from a Year 5 position in which CRCS is rated Meeting or better on every indicator where the Commission currently has a concern.

How the school reaches each milestone is the school's and board's decision. If a chosen approach is not producing the result, the school may change it without returning to the Commission for permission, provided the result arrives on schedule.

Condition 1 is the other half of the arrangement. Outcome-only accountability with an annual reporting cycle would leave the Commission without much evidence for eleven months at a time. The Commission staff will meet the school quarterly on the framework indicators, will conduct one of those quarterly meetings as an on-site mid-year visit with a campus walkthrough and classroom observations at all three campuses, will attach a second round of classroom observations at all three campuses to another of the quarterly meetings, and will hold a separate end-of-year meeting.

The Team's central finding

CRCS is attempting to provide a genuinely ambitious education model, and the distance between the model as described and the model as practiced is the school's principal risk. That gap is explicable — facilitator experience is thin, class sizes are near 23, there is no curriculum coordinator, professional development differs by building, and coaching is informal. But explanation is not resolution. A model this demanding requires a support system proportionate to its demands, and that system is not yet built.

5. How the Conditions Work

- **Two conditions.** Condition 1 is an oversight arrangement. Condition 2 is a five-year schedule of annual Performance Framework milestones. Every milestone is a result the Commission already measures, except in Year 1 where a baseline the Commission does not yet hold must first be established.
- **Effective on the vote, not on contract signing.** Year 1 is SY2026–27 — the final year of the current charter term — so the arrangement begins immediately rather than in July 2027. Years 2 through 5 run SY2027–28 through SY2030–31, inside the renewed term.
- **Annual determination.** The Commission staff determines each year whether that year's milestones were met.
- **Missed milestones go to the Intervention Protocol.** The Commission does not intend to wait until the next renewal to act. Section 8 sets out the pathway, which runs up to and including a Proposal of Termination at Level 4.

Baselines are confirmed with the school at the October 2026 quarterly meeting. Where a SY2025–26 figure in Condition 2 is preliminary, the final year-end figure becomes the baseline and the milestone schedule adjusts with it. The schedule is then presented to the Commission at its November 2026 Business Meeting.

6. The Conditions

CONDITION 1 Heightened Oversight Through Quarterly Meetings and On-Site Visits

Why this condition

The Level 2 Intervention Plan that closed on August 5, 2026 worked in the areas where it worked — reading proficiency, reading growth, and chronic absenteeism at both campuses — and the Commission knew, quarter by quarter, where it was not working.

This condition carries that cadence forward as the ordinary condition of the next term, without the school being on intervention. It also changes what the Commission looks at. The renewal site visit demonstrated that at this school the

classroom evidence and the performance data explain one another. A document review cannot show the Commission whether differentiation is happening. So the Commission staff observes classrooms at all three campuses twice in each year of the term.

This condition asks CRCS to produce no new documents. The data reviewed are the data the school already generates and already reports to the Commission. The classroom observations are conducted by Commission staff. Neither round of observations adds a meeting to the calendar: the mid-year visit is one of the four quarterly meetings conducted on site, and the second round is attached to another of them. Which quarterly meeting it attaches to is determined each year between the school's leadership team and Commission staff, so that it falls while school is in session and where it is most useful to both.

What this condition requires

Element	Requirement	Frequency
Quarterly performance meetings	CRCS leadership and governing board representatives meet with Commission staff. The agenda is the Performance Framework indicators listed in Condition 2, reviewed against a shared data tracker. Each meeting states which milestones are on track, which are not, and what the school reports it is doing about those that are not.	Four times per year: October, February (conducted as the mid-year site visit), April, and June or July
Mid-year meeting, expanded to a site visit	Two quarterly meeting each year is conducted on site rather than as a desk review. It includes a campus walkthrough and classroom observations at Creative Children's Academy, Dimensions Academy, and Overman Academy, and a meeting with the governing board and the leadership team together.	Annually (February) — this is the second quarterly meeting, not an additional one
Second round of classroom observations	Commission staff observe classrooms at all three campuses a second time in the same school year, in conjunction with one of the other quarterly meetings — ordinarily the first or the fourth. This is not an additional visit.	Annually — the quarterly meeting it attaches to is determined between the school's leadership team and Commission staff, and is scheduled while school is in session
End-of-year meeting	The end-of-year meeting is separate from the quarterly meetings and is a year-end data review against the Condition 2 milestones for that year.	Annually, ordinarily in August, following the close of the school year
Written summaries	Commission staff issue a written summary within 15 business days of each quarterly meeting, recording milestone status and observations. Summaries are provided to the Executive Director and the governing board chair.	After each meeting
Board visibility	Each quarterly summary is taken up by the board's Academic Excellence Committee and reported to the full board, so that the board is working from the same evidence as the Commission at the same time.	Quarterly

Satisfied when: CRCS participates in each scheduled meeting and visit with the required leadership and board representation, and provides the framework data under review. The condition is a standing obligation for the life of the term.

DRAFT

CONDITION 2 Annual Performance Framework Milestones**Why this condition**

Most indicators in the schedule below have been rated below Meeting at some point in this charter term, several for consecutive years. The remainder are included to hold gains the school has made, or to establish a measure the Commission does not yet hold. The Commission's expectation is that by Year 5 CRCS is rated Meeting or better on all of them. The annual milestones backmap from that endpoint.

A note on mathematics

CRCS submitted a Mathematics Action Plan in September 2026 and has asked to be renewed with mathematics conditions attached. The Team expects the school to implement that plan; the plan is thoughtful and it was produced without being required. The Commission's requirement is the mathematics results in the rows below.

Performance Framework indicator	Baseline (SY2025–26)	Year 1 SY2026–27	Year 2 SY2027–28	Year 3 SY2028–29	Year 4 SY2029–30	Year 5 SY2030–31
Performance Framework Section 1 · Student Achievement — Proficiency						
Academic Proficiency — Reading (Maine Through Year Assessment)	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Meeting (49% at or above state expectations) <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Meeting (46% at or above state expectation)	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses
Academic Proficiency — Math (Maine Through Year Assessment)	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Not Meeting (28% at or above state expectations) <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Not Meeting (26% at or above state expectations)	+5 points at each campus	+5 points; Approaching or better Overman	+5 points; Approaching or better at Dimensions; Meeting or better Overman	+5 points at Dimensions; Approaching or better at Dimensions; Meeting or better Overman	Meeting or better at both campuses
Proficiency by Subgroup — Reading	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Approaching <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Approaching	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Meeting or better; No reportable subgroup declines <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or	<u>Dimensions:</u> Meeting or better <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or better; No reportable subgroup declines	<u>Dimensions:</u> Meeting or better <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Meeting or better; No reportable subgroup declines	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses

Performance Framework indicator	Baseline (SY2025–26)	Year 1 SY2026–27	Year 2 SY2027–28	Year 3 SY2028–29	Year 4 SY2029–30	Year 5 SY2030–31
		better; No reportable subgroup declines				
Proficiency by Subgroup — Math	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Not Meeting <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Approaching	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; No reportable subgroup declines <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or better; No reportable subgroup declines	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or better; No reportable subgroup declines <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or better; No reportable subgroup declines	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Approaching or better; No reportable subgroup declines <u>Overman:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Meeting or better; No reportable subgroup declines	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points for each subgroup; Meeting or better; No reportable subgroup declines <u>Overman:</u> Meeting or better	Meeting or better at both campuses
Performance Framework Section 1 · Student Achievement — Growth²						
Academic Growth — Reading (NWEA)	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Exceeding (57% of students met growth goals) <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Meeting (46% of students met growth goals)	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses
Academic Growth — Math (NWEA)	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Not Meeting (30% of students met growth goals) <u>Overman (Grades 6-8 + 10):</u> Approaching (37% of students met growth goals)	+5 points at each campus; Approaching or better at both campuses	+5 points at each campus; <u>Dimensions:</u> Approaching or better <u>Overman:</u> Meeting or better	<u>Dimensions:</u> +5 points; Meeting or better <u>Overman:</u> Meeting or better	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses
Mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile (if adopted — see Section 9b)	Establish baseline ³ + appropriate growth trajectory with the school	Median CGP ≥ 50 at each campus (school proposed goal)	Median CGP ≥ 50 at each campus (school proposed goal)	Median CGP ≥ 50 at each campus (school proposed goal)	Median CGP ≥ 50 at each campus (school proposed goal)	Median CGP ≥ 50 at each campus (school proposed goal)
Performance Framework Section 1 · 3rd Grade Reading						

² The MCSC will consider commissioning a study with Momentum Research + Strategies to advise CRCS on the growth needed to reach proficiency goals. That advice may replace the goals in this section.

³ Establish baseline during Oct. 2026 school meeting; if study with Momentum is commissioned, Momentum will advise on growth trajectory goals.

Performance Framework Indicator	Baseline (SY2025–26)	Year 1 SY2026–27	Year 2 SY2027–28	Year 3 SY2028–29	Year 4 SY2029–30	Year 5 SY2030–31
3rd Grade at or above grade level	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: 50% Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: 50%	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: $\geq 55\%$ Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: $\geq 55\%$ Approaching or better	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: $\geq 60\%$ Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: $\geq 60\%$ Approaching or better	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: $\geq 65\%$ Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: $\geq 65\%$ Approaching or better	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: $\geq 70\%$ OR Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: $\geq 70\%$ Meeting or better	Percent of 3rd Graders at or above the 50th percentile: $\geq 70\%$ OR Percent of 3rd Graders who met or exceeded projected reading growth: $\geq 70\%$ Meeting or better
Performance Framework Section 1 · Post-Secondary						
Post-Secondary Activity Participation	Not Meeting — 53%	$\geq 60\%$ Approaching or better	$\geq 65\%$ Approaching or better	$\geq 70\%$ Meeting or better	Meeting or better	Meeting or better
Performance Framework Section 1 · Chronic Absenteeism						
Chronic Absenteeism — Dimensions Academy (Grades K-5)	28.9% (SY24-25 K-5 average = 18.9%)	$\leq 26\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average	$\leq 23\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Approaching or above	$\leq 20\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Approaching or above	$\leq 17\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Meeting or above	At or below the Maine statewide average; Meeting or above
Chronic Absenteeism — Overman Academy (grades 9–12)	40.2% (SY24-25 6-12 average = 28.9%) ⁴	$\leq 37\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average	$\leq 34\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Approaching or above	$\leq 31\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Approaching or above	$\leq 28\%$ and/or at or below the Maine statewide average; Meeting or above	At or below the Maine statewide average; Meeting or above
Performance Framework Section 2 · School Climate and Family Engagement						
Panorama — Student Results (by academy)	Exceeding in all stakeholder groups	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses	Meeting or better at both campuses
Performance Framework Section 3 · Organizational Sustainability						

⁴ The MCSC may update goals once SY25-26 state averages are made public.

Performance Framework Indicator	Baseline (SY2025–26)	Year 1 SY2026–27	Year 2 SY2027–28	Year 3 SY2028–29	Year 4 SY2029–30	Year 5 SY2030–31
Board Training Completion; Timely Posting of Agendas and Minutes; Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness	Meeting or Exceeding in all categories, expect timely posting of board agendas and minutes	Meeting or better at both campuses; including timely posting of board agendas and minutes	Meeting or better at both campuses in all organizational sustainability categories	Meeting or better at both campuses in all organizational sustainability categories	Meeting or better at both campuses in all organizational sustainability categories	Meeting or better at both campuses in all organizational sustainability categories
Performance Framework Section 4 · Financial Management and Viability						
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand	Moderate Risk	Moderate Risk or better	Moderate Risk or better	Moderate Risk or better	Moderate Risk or better	Moderate Risk or better
Enrollment Variance	High Risk	Reported; FY27 budget reconciled to the certified count	Moderate Risk or better	Moderate Risk or better	Low Risk	Low Risk
All other financial metrics	Low Risk	Maintain Low Risk	Maintain Low Risk	Maintain Low Risk	Maintain Low Risk	Maintain Low Risk
Performance Framework Section 5 · Student Persistence and Enrollment						
Student Persistence — Year-to-Year	<u>Dimensions:</u> <u>Overman:</u> <i>(To establish a baseline, we will use the 10/1/26 student count and input goals to ensure the school is meeting expectations by Year 5.)</i>					
Student Persistence — School Year	<u>Dimensions:</u> 79% <u>Overman:</u> 76% (Overall, 78% of students enrolled on 10/1/25 were enrolled on the last day of school) Approaching	<u>Dimensions:</u> + 5 points <u>Overman:</u> + 5 points Approaching or better	Meeting or better	Meeting or better	Meeting or better	Meeting or better
October 1 certified enrollment count	<u>Creative:</u> 44 students <u>Dimensions:</u> 160 students <u>Overman:</u> 169 students Total: 373 students	Oct. 1, 2026 count pending; ≈ 330–340 reported; School Board determines enrollment count trajectory by grade level aligned with	Enrollment count trajectory aligned with budget is met	Enrollment count trajectory aligned with budget is met	Enrollment count trajectory aligned with budget is met	Enrollment count trajectory aligned with budget is met

Performance Framework indicator	Baseline (SY2025–26)	Year 1 SY2026–27	Year 2 SY2027–28	Year 3 SY2028–29	Year 4 SY2029–30	Year 5 SY2030–31
		budget for the next 5 years ⁵				
Performance Framework Section 6 · School Customization						
Math growth within 1 standard deviation	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> Not Meeting (45% of students meeting growth target) <u>Overman (Grades 6-12):</u> Approaching (50% of students meeting growth target) <i>(This is the same spring NWEA administration as the growth measure above, read with standard error.)</i> Schoolwide Goal: 60%-70%	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> +5 points; Approaching <u>Overman (Grades 6-12):</u> +5 points; Approaching	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> +5 points; Approaching <u>Overman (Grades 6-12):</u> +5 points; Meeting	<u>Dimensions (Grades 3-5):</u> +5 points; Meeting <u>Overman (Grades 6-12):</u> Meeting or better	Both Meeting or Better	Both Meeting or Better

Notes on the schedule

- Baselines are confirmed with the school at the October 2026 quarterly meeting. Where a SY2025–26 figure is marked preliminary, the final year-end figure becomes the baseline, and the schedule adjusts with it. Where a figure is marked school-reported, it is drawn from the renewal application and has not yet been verified on the Performance Framework; those baselines are confirmed against framework data before the schedule is finalized. The confirmed schedule is presented to the Commission at its November 2026 Business Meeting.
- If the Commission adopts the mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile indicator under Section 9b, that row takes effect as written. If the Commission commissions a growth-to-proficiency trajectory analysis, any targets that analysis produces can replace the corresponding academic rows.
- Year 5 of this schedule is SY2030–31, the fourth year of the renewed term to provide the Commission with sufficient evidence to inform the next renewal.

Satisfied when: Each year's milestones are met and evidenced through the annual Performance Framework submission. This condition is released only when Year 5 is reached with all indicators rated Meeting or better.

⁵ If the CRCS enrollment projection goes above or below the current contractually approved enrollment range, the MSCS will vote to consider adoption of the proposed enrollment.

7. Support the Commission Will Make Available

None of the following is a condition. The Commission records them here so that the school and the board know what is available. Participation in Accelerate Education is the school's decision and is encouraged by the Commission. Any targets that the Momentum analysis produces would replace rows of the Condition 2 schedule.

Support	What it is
Accelerate Education — Executive Director Cohort	A ten-month MCSC pilot began with discovery interviews in August–September 2026, launching at an in-person retreat in October 2026, with three virtual sessions between November 2026 and March 2027, a visit to a high-performing charter school, and a close-out in April–May 2027. The Commission encourages the Executive Director's participation.
Accelerate Education — executive coaching	Individual coaching for the executive director a six-month engagement drawing on the Winning on Priorities framework.
Accelerate Education — school health assessment	A structured site visit against a national best-practice framework, with a debrief and preliminary action planning.
Momentum Strategy & Research	The Commission may commission a follow-on growth-to-proficiency trajectory analysis to establish how much growth, sustained over how many years, reaches proficiency for learners who start in the low average range — and to refine the Year 2 through Year 5 academic targets accordingly.

8. Monitoring, Intervention, and Consequences

If the Commission renews with conditions, the conditions become terms of the renewed charter contract and are enforceable as such. They take effect on the Commission's vote of October 13, 2026 rather than on contract signing, so that Year 1 runs in SY2026–27.

The annual oversight cycle

When	What happens
October 2026	First quarterly meeting. Baselines confirmed with the school, the withdrawal-series definition reconciled, and the milestone schedule finalized.
November 2026 Business Meeting	The confirmed milestone schedule and meeting calendar are presented to the Commission.
February (mid-year)	Second quarterly meeting, conducted on site: campus walkthrough and classroom observations at all three campuses, and a meeting with the governing board and leadership team.
April	Third quarterly meeting with leadership and board, against the shared data tracker.
June or July	Fourth quarterly meeting with leadership and board, against the shared data tracker.
October or June/July	Second round of classroom observations at all three campuses, conducted in conjunction with the first or fourth quarterly meeting. Which one is determined each

When	What happens
	year between the school's leadership team and Commission staff, and it is scheduled while school is in session.
August	End-of-year meeting, separate from the quarterly meetings: year-end data review against that year's Condition 2 milestones.
By June 30, 2027	The renewed charter contract is reviewed and signed, with both conditions and the milestone schedule incorporated as contract terms.
Annually	The Commission staff eviws milestone status alongside the annual Performance Report.

If annual milestones are not met

The Commission does not intend to wait until the next renewal to act. Where a year's milestones are not met, the Commission will engage the same process it has just completed with this school, under the Commission's standing Intervention Protocol — most recently applied to CRCS in the January 27, 2026 Level 2 designation.

Conditions that may trigger intervention

Under the Intervention Protocol, conditions that may trigger intervention include, and are not limited to:

- Failure to meet academic performance expectations, as identified in the Performance Framework;
- Failure to meet indicators of financial liability or sustainability;
- Non-compliance;
- Violations of federal or state statutes and applicable board policy, or breaches of contract;
- Issues pertaining to student safety, equity, or access;
- Adverse findings in routine oversight; or
- Substantiated complaints.

The escalation pathway

The Protocol is applied with the professional judgment of Commission staff and Commissioners. The Commission reserves the right to skip levels of intervention as necessary, and to move toward immediate closure of a school upon a finding that the health, welfare, or safety of enrolled pupils is at imminent risk.

Level	Conditions that may trigger the status	Consequences that may be required
Level 1	Indications of weak or declining performance identified through routine monitoring, site visits, or other means; repeated failure to submit requirements by the due date.	Letter of Concern to the school board detailing the concern; the Commission's requirements for resolution, the timeline, and the consequences if not satisfactorily remedied.
Level 2	Failure to satisfactorily remedy, or make substantial progress toward remedying, a previously identified concern; failure to meet multiple performance targets; failure to comply with applicable law or breach of contract.	Letter of Concern; requirements for resolution with timeline and consequences; specialized site visit; meeting with the school board; a corrective action plan developed by the school and approved by the Commission; probation with interview and public hearing.

Level	Conditions that may trigger the status	Consequences that may be required
Level 3	Multiple “does not meet expectations” ratings on the Performance Framework; continued failure to comply with applicable law or with the charter contract; failure to meet or make sufficient progress toward the terms of a corrective action plan.	A corrective action plan developed by the school and approved by the Commission; meeting with the school board; probation with interview and public hearing; the Commission may appoint an agent to monitor implementation of the corrective action plan.
Level 4	Extended pattern of failure to comply or to meet performance targets; failure to satisfactorily address or make sufficient progress toward meeting the terms of probation.	Specialized site visit; Proposal of Termination — written notice from the Commission stating the reason for proposed termination at least 60 days prior to the proposed effective date of termination.

Because the milestone schedule in Condition 2 is drawn from the Performance Framework itself, a year in which several milestones are missed is likely to be a year producing several ratings of Not Meeting. The Commission notes plainly that multiple Not Meeting ratings in a single year are the Level 3 trigger as the Protocol states it, and that an extended pattern of failure to meet performance targets is the Level 4 trigger, at which one consequence may be a Proposal of Termination of the charter.

Modification and release

- Conditions may be modified by the Commission on the school’s written request for cause.
- Where the Commission adopts the mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile indicator, or adopts trajectory targets from a commissioned analysis, those replace the corresponding rows of the milestone schedule rather than adding to them.
- Condition 1 is a standing obligation for the life of the term. Condition 2 is released when Year 5 is reached with every listed indicator rated Meeting or better.

9. Related Actions for the Commission

Two matters arise from the renewal record that are not conditions and require the Commission’s separate attention.

a. Maximum enrollment

The renewal application states a maximum projected enrollment of 420 at full growth with the current building structure. The school has not requested an amendment to the ceiling, and the Team is not proposing one here. It notes only that the contract ceiling is now roughly 33 learners below what the school projects at full growth and recommends the Commission take up alignment of the ceiling as a separate item once the board’s campus configuration decision is made, rather than folding it into the renewal vote.

b. Performance Framework amendment — mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile

CRCS proposes adding a mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile indicator beginning in SY2026–27, with a target median CGP of at least 50 at each academy, fall to spring, and a 40th-percentile floor triggering documented response for grades 6–8, learners with IEPs, and economically disadvantaged learners. The Team supports adoption as a condition. CGP accounts for where a learner starts the year, which is precisely the measurement problem Momentum identified, and the school has proposed it as a supplement to rather than a replacement for the Maine Through Year proficiency measures.

10. Submission

The Renewal Review Team reached consensus on this recommendation following the September 10, 2026 renewal site visit and a review of the full evidence record described in Section 2. The Team recommends that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of Community Regional Charter School for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027, subject to the two conditions set out in Section 6.

Nothing in this report should be construed as indicating the Commission's renewal decision, which rests with a vote of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted by the Renewal Review Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

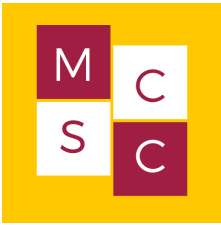
Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

Coversheet

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Renewal Recommendation

Section:	III. Agenda Items - For Discussion
Item:	B. Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Renewal Recommendation
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	MeANS_Renewal_Recommendation_Final.pdf



MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

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Charter Renewal Recommendation

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

Hinckley, Maine · Grades 9–12 · Opened 2012

RECOMMENDATION

Renew for a five-year term, without conditions

Four areas of continued focus, tracked through the existing Performance Framework, are set out in Section 6.

Submitted to	Members of the Maine Charter School Commission
Submitted by	The Renewal Review Team
Date	September 15, 2026
Statutory authority	20-A M.R.S. §2411; MCSC Rule Chapter 3 (90-668)
Application filed	September 4, 2026 (certification signed September 3, 2026)
Renewal site visit	September 9, 2026
Public hearing	September 23, 2026
Commission vote	October 13, 2026 — 39 days after filing, within the 45-day statutory window

Renewal Review Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

This recommendation is the Review Team's consensus advice to the Commission. It is not the Commission's decision, which rests with a vote of the Commission at its October 13, 2026 Business Meeting. A draft of this recommendation will be provided to the school on September 28, 2026 with a 48-hour review period.

1. The Recommendation

The Renewal Review Team recommends that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027 and ending June 30, 2032, without conditions.

MeANS is a school delivering a distinctive mission with fidelity and producing outcomes for a high-need population. Roughly 80% of its students are economically disadvantaged and about a quarter receive special education services — a share the school reports has risen to 28% in the current year. Against that profile, family climate results have Exceeded expectations in all four years of the term at the 99th percentile nationally; student persistence moved from Approaching to Exceeding, with year-to-year re-enrollment climbing from 78% to 96%; post-secondary activity participation Exceeded expectations in every year; and the school held its first enrollment lottery in SY2024–25. Mission and Key Design Implementation was rated Meeting across the entire term, and the customized Natural Science Intensives indicator Exceeded its target.

The areas that remain — mathematics, chronic absenteeism, and financial margin — are ones the school named before the Team raised them, each is paired with a documented response, and two of the three show clear multi-year progress. Chronic absenteeism has fallen from 58% in SY2021–22, the year before the current charter term, to 37% preliminary in SY2025–26. Financially, the school built a deliberate three-year enrollment-recovery strategy, has now completed two years of it ahead of plan, and finished FY26 with more cash than it started with rather than drawing down reserves as budgeted. Taken together, this is the record of a school that identifies its own challenges and manages its own improvement.

Why a five-year term rather than a longer one

Title 20-A 2411 permits renewal for up to fifteen years where performance warrants. The Team recommends the standard five years. Chronic absenteeism has been rated Not Meeting in all four years of the term; state proficiency has been inconsistent, with Grade 10 reading moving from Exceeding in SY2023–24 to Not Meeting in SY2024–25 before a strong SY25-26 rebound; and the three-year total margin and two-year cash flow were rated High Risk in FY24 and FY25, with financial obligations coverage also High Risk in FY24. The school's enrollment-recovery strategy is in its final budgeted year, and the FY28 balanced-budget target has not yet been tested. A five-year term keeps the Commission's next full review at the point where those questions will have answers. A five-year term should be read as the ordinary course rather than as a reservation about the school.

Suggested motion

Moved, that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2027 and concluding June 30, 2032, without conditions; and that the renewed charter contract be reviewed and signed no later than June 30, 2027.

2. Evidence Considered

Consistent with 20-A M.R.S. §2411, this recommendation is grounded in evidence of the school's performance over the charter term, measured against the Performance Framework and the charter contract. It is not grounded in

promises of future improvement. The school's plans for the next term are relevant context; they are not the basis for the renewal decision itself.

Evidence	What it contributed
Year 4 Performance Report (June 30, 2026)	Four-year record against the Performance Framework across academic, financial, and organizational indicators.
Renewal Application (filed September 4, 2026)	The school's supplemental evidence, its financial assurance and FY25–FY26 results, turnover data, next-term plans, and the draft FY27–FY29 three-year forecast.
FY25 Surplus Plan and enrollment strategy	The board-level plan governing the use of FY25 reserves across FY26 and FY27 and the enrollment targets attached to it.
Renewal Site Visit Report (visit September 9, 2026)	Classroom observations and focus groups with administration, the governing board, teachers and staff, students, and families.
Historical record of the charter term	Administration, board, and document-review visits in Years 11–13; the Year 14 end-of-year visit; the August 12, 2026 on-site end-of-year visit; annual reporting.
Public testimony	Comments from community members, students, and staff at the September 23, 2026 public hearing, to be considered by the Commission before it votes.

The evidence base is the annual framework record, the school's own submissions, and the renewal visit.

3. What the Record Shows

Strengths that are genuine and documented

Area	Evidence over the term
Mission fidelity	Mission and Key Design Implementation rated Meeting in all four years. The customized Natural Science Intensives indicator Exceeded its target at 88%. Mission alignment was the most consistently corroborated finding of the renewal visit, described in similar language, independently, by leadership, the board, teachers, students, and families.
School climate and family engagement	Panorama family results Exceeded expectations in every year of the term, with all required scales at the 99th percentile nationally against similar schools. Student results Exceeded in SY2023–24 through SY2025–26. Teacher results moved from Not Meeting in SY2022–23 to Exceeding in SY2023–24 and then Meeting in SY2024–25 and SY2025–26. The school reports a reduction of more than 80% in suspensions from SY2025 to SY2026 — school-reported, and not a Performance Framework measure.
Student persistence	Over the charter term, in-year persistence moved 86% to 91%; year-to-year re-enrollment moved 78% to 96% — from Approaching to Exceeding. In SY2024–25 demand allowed the school to hold its first enrollment lottery and establish waitlists.
Post-secondary readiness	Post-Secondary Activity Participation Exceeded expectations in all four years (100%, 100%, 93%, 100%). Accuplacer results held within or above the 75–85% target band every year, reaching 84% reading and 86% math in SY2025–26, at the top of

Area	Evidence over the term
	the school's historical range (reading moved 76%, 85%, 82%, 84%). The school reports that all 25 of its most recent Campus seniors graduated and that 18 of them — 72% — were accepted to a two- or four-year college. In the Threshold cohort, only five students did not graduate in 4 years and two students intentionally took a 5th year and both graduated.
The Threshold Program	Threshold is MeANS' program for students whose lives make conventional attendance impossible: students who are pregnant or parenting, students managing physical or emotional health challenges, and students who are over-age and under-credited by the time they arrive. The design takes those circumstances as the starting point rather than as obstacles to be excused. Students work independently from home three days a week on the same standards-based, State and Common Core-aligned curriculum MeANS uses on campus; a teacher meets each student at home weekly and monitors daily progress online; and students come to campus on selected Mondays for hands-on learning in the greenhouses, woods, trails, and museum. Coursework runs through individualized projects in the core subjects alongside work in parenting and child development, health, and practical skills, and every student completes a capstone project on a question of personal significance and a concrete plan for life after graduation. Students may also take courses at Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) or any Maine community college through the tuition waiver program. In practice, this means a student who cannot sit in a classroom five days a week is still held to a full diploma standard, with the scaffolding of a weekly in-home teacher relationship and daily contact. Families told the review team at the renewal visit that Threshold was the reason their children graduated at all. Staff and board alike treat the program as core to the school's mission rather than a peripheral offering. Alternative high school programs nationally graduate students at far lower four-year rates — nearly half graduate fewer than 50 percent of students (ProPublica analysis of federal data) — which is why most state accountability systems evaluate them on extended five- and six-year graduation rates instead.
Governance	Governing Board Effectiveness rated Low Risk in every rated year. Board meeting requirements met in all four years, with seven meetings in each of the last two. Timely posting of agendas and minutes was uneven across the term — Not Meeting, Approaching, Not Meeting — before reaching Exceeding in SY2025–26. A documented school leader evaluation process, revised in SY2023–24, with seven rubric areas and joint goal setting. The board managed a mid-year Head of School departure in December 2024 through an interim co-leadership model and a successful search; the school reports that programming and budget held steady through it.
Financial management practice	Financial Planning and Budgeting rated Meeting in every rated year; the current ratio Moderate Risk in SY2022–23 and Low Risk thereafter, and the debt-to-asset ratio Low Risk in both rated years. A clean FY25 audit opinion with one minor internal-control recommendation. The Team found financial reporting practice to exceed what it typically observes at schools of this size, and found the underlying funding tension understood at every level of the organization rather than avoided.
Execution against the financial plan	FY25 delivered a \$42,273 operating surplus against a budgeted \$28,046 and a \$189,149 cash increase against a budgeted \$167,087. FY26 closed with an

Area	Evidence over the term
	unaudited net loss of approximately \$24,629 against an anticipated/budgeted \$117,191 — ~\$92,562 better — and cash and short-term investments rose by roughly \$16,555 rather than falling as planned. Enrollment for Threshold grew from about 45 to 57 against a target of ten additional students. All fleet vehicle and bus lease obligations were paid off during FY26.

Areas where performance has not yet met expectations

Area	Evidence over the term
Chronic absenteeism	Rated Not Meeting in all four years, ending at 37% preliminary in SY2025–26. The trajectory is strongly positive — down from 58% at the start of the prior charter period, a 21-point improvement — and the Commission has revised the target in the Performance Framework that went into effect in SY25-26 to align with Maine's statewide average, against which the school's rate is more consistent with the counties it draws from, particularly Somerset at approximately 32%. It remains above target.
Mathematics	Grade 10 mathematics was rated Approaching in SY2023–24 and Not Meeting in SY2024–25, consistently trailing the state. SY2025–26 results rebounded by more than doubling to 41% above state expectations. Mathematics was identified by both the Team and school leadership as the area of greatest academic need.
Inconsistency in state proficiency	Grade 10 reading moved from Exceeding in SY2023–24 (70% against 61% statewide) to Not Meeting in SY2024–25 (35% against 59%) before rebounding to 74% in SY2025-26. Proficiency by subgroup followed the same pattern in reading. With cohorts this small, a single year's result carries limited signal; the inconsistency itself is the finding.
State-reported graduation rate	Two structural features of MeANS' enrollment and calendar depress the blended four-year rate without reflecting the education the school delivers. First, MeANS accepts students at every grade level, including twelfth grade, and serves students for whom it is often the last available option. Some students enroll in their senior year and never attend. Under state enrollment rules, those students remain MeANS' responsibility unless another school claims them, and they are ultimately counted as dropouts in the school's cohort. Because they remain in the cohort denominator, they depress the five- and six-year rates in subsequent years as well, which accounts for the Not Meeting ratings on that indicator. Second, MeANS' school year runs into mid-July while the state's reporting year closes June 30, so students who finish their diplomas in July fall outside the four-year window and are counted in later cohorts. Campus four-year graduation, which is less exposed to both effects, held at 92–95% and rated Meeting or Exceeding throughout.
Financial sustainability measures	The three-year total margin and two-year cash flow were rated High Risk in both FY24 and FY25, and enrollment variance moved from Moderate to High Risk. Unrestricted days cash on hand was High Risk at 26 days in FY24 and Moderate at 36 days in FY25. Financial obligations coverage was also High Risk in FY24 before returning to Low Risk in FY25. These ratings reflect a deliberate enrollment rebuild rather than a loss of financial control, and the school's FY26 results show

Area	Evidence over the term
	improvement in net operating result, cash position, current ratio, and long-term lease obligations.

4. Why Renewal Without Conditions

The statutory test

The grounds for non-renewal under 20-A M.R.S. §2411 are failure to comply with the charter statute, material violation of the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures of the charter contract, failure to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations in the contract, failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management, or violation of law. None is present. MeANS is in compliance with its contract, is current on all liabilities including payroll taxes and employee benefits, has not defaulted on any financial obligation, and holds a clean FY25 audit opinion. On the indicators where it has not met expectations, it has made sufficient progress — in the case of chronic absenteeism, a 21-point improvement sustained over five years.

What conditions are for

The Commission attaches conditions when a school's own systems are not reliably producing the improvement the record requires, and the authorizer therefore needs an instrument short of non-renewal. That is a judgment about capacity, not about whether challenges exist. Every school has challenges. The question is whether the school identifies them, plans against them, executes the plan, and reports on the result.

On that test the record is unusually clear. Each area the Team identified as an opportunity had already been identified by the school — in its self-assessment, in its renewal application, or by board members and leadership in the focus groups themselves, often before the Team raised it. In most cases the area was already the subject of a strategic goal, a committee assignment, a grant application, or a staffing decision. Chronic absenteeism is the focus of the board's three-year strategic plan and the school has secured a Charter Commission Innovation Grant to fund a Community School Coordinator to work on it. The mathematics department spent SY2025–26 reviewing data and student work with support from Rural Aspirations, and preliminary Grade 10 results more than doubled. The financial strategy was designed, budgeted, executed, and outperformed across two consecutive years.

The disposition of the organization

The Team records as a distinct finding that leadership and the governing board engaged with every difficult question without defensiveness. Board members volunteered past governance missteps, including a staffing reduction made without full board involvement, and described the corrective change in practice. They named their own gaps — development capacity and publicity — in their own words. Leadership was candid about the current Grade 10 cohort, about mathematics, and about the limits of what the funding formula supports. Candor helps make conditions unnecessary — when an organization is honest about its own challenges, the authorizer doesn't have to be the one to raise them.

The Team's conclusion

What remains to be done at MeANS is real, acknowledged, and largely structural — the cost of an innovative, small, rural, hands-on program against a per-pupil funding formula that does not readily accommodate it. They are not a product of poor practice, and they are not evidence of an organization that cannot govern itself. Formal conditions would add a compliance burden to a school that is already doing the work, and would draw staff capacity away from that work at a school where leadership is thin by design and by budget. The areas in Section 6

warrant the Commission's sustained attention. They do not warrant conditions, and the Team recommends renewal with confidence.

5. How to Read the Areas of Continued Focus

Section 6 sets out four areas the Team recommends the Commission watch across the next charter term. They are not conditions. Each is already measured by an existing Performance Framework indicator or by reporting the contract already requires, and each is reported on the Commission's ordinary annual cycle. They are framed as forward-looking priorities the school and the Commission already share.

For each area, this report states what the record shows, what the school has already committed to do, and where the Commission will see the result. Section 7 consolidates those measures into a single monitoring table and states what the Commission can do if the trend reverses.

Areas of continued focus are advisory. Nothing in Section 6 is a term of the renewed charter contract, and nothing in it should be read as a finding that the school has failed to meet an expectation.

6. Areas of Continued Focus

These are not conditions. Each is tracked through an existing Performance Framework indicator or reporting the contract already requires.

FOCUS 1 Mathematics

What the record shows

Grade 10 mathematics was rated Approaching in SY2023–24 and Not Meeting in SY2024–25, trailing the state throughout. Both the Team and school leadership named it as the school's area of greatest academic need. Preliminary SY2025–26 results more than doubled, to 41% at or above expectations, and Accuplacer mathematics reached 86%, at the top of the school's historical range of roughly 84–86%. Leadership also identified the current Grade 10 cohort as carrying substantial need. With cohorts this small, one year of improvement is a genuinely encouraging signal, and the Commission should look for the gain to hold across successive cohorts.

What the school has already committed to

The mathematics department spent SY2025–26 reviewing assessment data and student work and re-examining instructional practice with support from Rural Aspirations. The school has added AP Pre-Calculus, an educational technician position for academic support with an explicit executive-functioning focus, and a full-inclusion model in which special educators push into general-education classes. Gear Up RISE Maine has funded mathematics workshops that the school credits with instructional gains.

Where the Commission will see it: Academic Proficiency — Math (Grade 10) and Proficiency by Subgroup — Math on the annual Performance Framework, alongside Accuplacer mathematics and MAP Growth results in grades 9 and 11.

FOCUS 2 Chronic Absenteeism**What the record shows**

Chronic absenteeism has been rated Not Meeting in all four years of the term and stood at 37% preliminary in SY2025–26. It is also the school's single clearest multi-year improvement: down from 58% in SY2021–22, the year before the current charter term — a 21-point reduction. Measured against the statewide average the Commission now uses as the benchmark, the rate is broadly consistent with the counties MeANS draws from most, particularly Somerset at approximately 32%. A portion of the count reflects students who withdrew before year-end — nine such students in SY2024–25. The school told the Team it lacks baseline data on students' attendance before they enrolled and after they leave, which means the school's own contribution to the improvement is likely understated in the reported rate.

What the school has already committed to

Attendance is the focus of the board's three-year strategic plan and the school names it as one of its highest priorities for the next five years. For SY2026–27 the school is deploying an attendance-focused professional learning community, partnering with Count ME In!, and implementing a tiered approach including personal phone calls, one-to-one attendance interviews, student competitions, and weekly advisor outreach. A Charter Commission Innovation Grant will fund a Community School Coordinator to problem-solve barriers and conduct home visits. The school intends to connect its attendance and academics professional learning communities so that classroom engagement and attendance are worked on together.

Where the Commission will see it: Chronic Absenteeism on the annual Performance Framework, reported against the statewide average benchmark, with the Team recommending that county-level context continue to be reported alongside it.

FOCUS 3 Financial Sustainability and Enrollment Growth**What the record shows**

The three-year total margin and two-year cash flow were rated High Risk in both FY24 and FY25. FY26 data indicates improvements in these metrics. While the three-year total margin is still rated High Risk, the negative score has improved from -4.7% in FY24 to -0.7% in FY26 (draft). The two-year cash flow has improved to a Low Risk rating as the unrestricted cash balance has increased. The enrollment variance was High Risk in FY25, but has improved to Moderate Risk in FY26 (draft). Unrestricted days cash on hand was 26 days in FY24, 36 days in FY25 and 47 days in FY26 (draft). These scores reflect a deliberate enrollment rebuild rather than a loss of financial control, and the school has now executed two years of its recovery strategy ahead of plan. FY26 closed with an unaudited net loss of approximately \$24,629 against a budgeted loss of \$117,191, cash and short-term investments rose by roughly \$16,555 rather than being drawn down, and the preliminary current ratio stood at about 3.4. The enrollment rebuild strategy's final budgeted year is FY27, with the plan targeting a balanced operating position in FY28 at 197 students and a surplus in FY29 at 207. Enrollment stood at approximately 189 at the September 9 site visit and 190 as reported in the application, against a contracted enrollment of 190. The FY28 target has not yet been tested, and the school carries exposure to enrollment variance under a per-pupil formula. The Team notes that MeANS met or exceeded both the operating and cash assumptions underlying its strategy in each of the first two completed years.

What the school has already committed to

The school operates an annually updated rolling multi-year forecast that incorporates actual enrollment, instructional capacity, and prior-year results, and states in its application that staffing and operating expenses may be expanded, deferred, reduced, or restructured to align cost structure with actual enrollment. It has eliminated the bus lease liability, reduced accounts payable, and declined to automatically backfill vacant positions — the unfilled

Transportation Manager role was reduced in the FY27 budget rather than replaced. The FY27–FY29 forecast was scheduled for board approval on September 10, 2026.

Where the Commission will see it: The financial section of the annual Performance Framework — total three-year margin, two-year cash flow, days cash on hand, enrollment variance, and current ratio — together with the annual audit and the October 1 certified enrollment count.

FOCUS 4 Visibility, Marketing, and Brand Differentiation

What the record shows

The school reports that students who find MeANS consistently enroll and stay — year-to-year re-enrollment reached 96% — but that many families within its catchment do not know the school exists as an option, and that distinguishing MeANS from Good Will-Hinckley in the public mind remains a persistent challenge. Because enrollment drives the funding formula, this is not only a communications question; it is the same question as Focus 3 approached from the other side.

What the school has already committed to

The school reports increased marketing effort including attendance at public-facing events such as job and business expos, exploration of radio and television advertising, and new social media approaches. Staff visit and present at choice schools across central Maine, host multiple open houses, and give individual tours. Partnership with K–8 and middle schools was raised at the renewal visit as a strategy worth pursuing. The board is recruiting specifically for publicity and social media capacity.

Where the Commission will see it: The October 1 certified enrollment count and Enrollment Variance on the annual Performance Framework, alongside the school's own reporting on recruitment activity.

7. Monitoring in the Next Charter Term

No new reporting is created by this recommendation. The table below consolidates the existing measures through which the Commission will see movement in each area of focus.

Area of focus	Existing measure	Reported
Mathematics	Academic Proficiency — Math (Gr. 10); Proficiency by Subgroup — Math; Accuplacer math; MAP Growth	Annual Performance Framework
Chronic absenteeism	Chronic Absenteeism against the statewide average benchmark, with county context	Annual Performance Framework
Financial sustainability	Three-year total margin; two-year cash flow; days cash on hand; enrollment variance; current ratio	Annual financial framework and audit
Visibility and enrollment	October 1 certified count; Enrollment Variance	Annual certified count and framework

8. Matters for the Commission and Staff

Two matters arise from the renewal record. None is a condition. Both call for staff follow-up, and one also raises a policy question the Team recommends the Commission take up on its own initiative.

a. The board-approved FY27–FY29 forecast

The three-year financial forecast embedded in the renewal application is marked draft and was scheduled for board approval on September 10, 2026. The school states that its established practice is to approve the rolling three-year forecast after the school year begins, so that current enrollment, staffing, and operational information can be incorporated, and that it will provide the final approved version to the Commission after the September vote. The Team recommends staff obtain the board-approved version and confirm it before the renewed contract is signed on or before June 30, 2027. The Team does not regard the draft status as a deficiency in the application; the practice is sound and the reason given is a good one.

b. Graduation-rate reporting

The school reported a graduation rate of 92.3% to the Team; the Year 4 Performance Report shows a preliminary state-reported four-year cohort rate of 88% (43 of 49) alongside Campus four-year graduation of 92%. Separately, the school reports that all 25 of its most recent Campus seniors graduated, while the Year 4 report records one Campus non-graduate and a 92% Campus four-year rate. Staff should confirm the state-reported cohort rate alongside the school-reported figures so that the Commission and the public are working from the same numbers.

The Team also recommends the Commission take up the underlying methodology question on its own initiative, because it affects more than one school. Under the state's method a student who enrolls at MeANS but never attends, and does not later enroll elsewhere, is counted as a MeANS dropout. The Threshold Program by design serves over-age, under-credited students who often need a fifth or sixth year, and the state closes its cohort on June 30 while the MeANS school year extends into July. The result is a blended four-year rate rated Not Meeting in two years of the term while Campus four-year graduation rated Meeting or Exceeding throughout and the five-year rate reached 100% among students taking a fifth year. The Commission cannot change the state calculation, but it can decide how the blended rate is weighted and presented in its own framework and reports, and whether the Campus and Threshold customization indicators should carry the interpretive weight the structural facts warrant.

9. Submission

The Renewal Review Team reached consensus on this recommendation following the September 9, 2026 renewal site visit and a review of the full evidence record described in Section 2. The Team recommends that the Maine Charter School Commission renew the charter of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027 and ending June 30, 2032, without conditions. The Team records its respect for what the school has built — a coherent, distinctive program that students, families, and staff describe in the same terms, delivered to a population many schools find hard to serve well.

Nothing in this report should be construed as indicating the Commission's renewal decision, which rests with a vote of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted by the Renewal Review Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

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