Maine Charter School Commission

Business Meeting

Published on October 13, 2026 at 8:23 AM EDT

Date and Time

Tuesday October 13, 2026 at 10:00 AM EDT

Location

Randall Student Center Fireside Lounge, University of Maine Augusta, 46 University Drive, Augusta

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

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

Reminders:

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

Any person seeking special accommodation for the public meeting should contact Amy Allen at (207)592-6364 or amy@mainecharterschoolcommission.org

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Agenda

		Purpose	Presenter
I.	**Opening Items**		
A.	Record Attendance		Amy Allen
B.	Call the Meeting to Order		Brian Langley
C.	To Consider the Approval of the 9/8/26 Commission Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Brian Langley
II.	**Comments From Commission Chair**		
A.	Comments	Discuss	Brian Langley

- *Moment of Silence in Memory of Norm Higgins*
  (Former Commission member and two-term Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission)
- *Update to Finance Committee Membership*

III.	**Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda**		
A.	Additions/Adjustments	Discuss	Brian Langley
IV.	**Committee Reports**		
A.	School Performance Committee	FYI	Tom Keller
B.	Finance Committee	FYI	Jim Handy
C.	Executive Committee	FYI	Brian Langley
V.	**Public Comment***		
A.	Public Comment	Discuss	Brian Langley
VI.	**Presentation(s)**		

- *None*

		Purpose	Presenter
VII.	**Executive Director/Commission Staff Report**		
A.	School Updates	Discuss	Lana Ewing
B.	Organizational Updates	Discuss	Lana Ewing
C.	Media Updates	FYI	Lana Ewing

- *51 Maine Students Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists*
- *County residents among Maine Connections Academy graduates*

VIII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

- *None*

IX. Unfinished Business

- *None*

X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A.	To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Application	Vote	Brian Langley

- *CRCS Renewal Application*
- *Site Visit Report*
- *Year 4 Performance Report*

B.	To Consider the Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Renewal Application	Vote	Brian Langley

- *MeANS Renewal Application*
- *Site Visit Report*
- *Year 4 Performance Report*

	Purpose	Presenter

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

A. New Governing Board Members — FYI — Brian Langley

- *Maine Virtual Academy (Erin Shanahan)*

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board — FYI — Brian Langley

- *None*

C. Board Member Term Outs — FYI — Brian Langley

- *None*

XII. Future Topics

A. Future Topics — FYI — Brian Langley

November

- Presentation of Maine Connections Academy's Independent 3rd Party Evaluation
- Presentation by Unity Environmental University
- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report

December

- NO MEETING

XIII. Announcements

A. Important Dates — FYI — Brian Langley

Events

- *Monday, January 25th (8:00am-12:00pm) - Charter Public School Day at the Hall of Flags*

		Purpose	Presenter

Professional Development

- *Thursday, October 22nd (10:00-11:30am)/BoardOnTrack PD - "Governance and Fiduciary Duties"/Zoom*
- *Thursday, November 5th (10:00-11:30am)/PLT Strategies - "Communications and Advocacy 101"/Zoom*

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s) — FYI — Brian Langley

- Tuesday, November 10th (10:00am-12:00pm) - Location TBD
- Tuesday, January 12th (10:00am-12:00pm) - Location TBD

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting — Vote — Brian Langley

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Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of the 9/8/26 Commission Meeting Minutes

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	C. To Consider the Approval of the 9/8/26 Commission Meeting Minutes
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for Business Meeting on September 8, 2026

APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Business Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday September 8, 2026 at 10:00 AM

Location
Maine Virtual Academy, Ballard Center, Suite 230, 6 East Chestnut Street, Augusta

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

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Directors Present

Brian Langley (remote), James Ford, Jeremy Ray, Jim Handy (remote), Tom Keller, Victoria Cohen

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Brian Langley called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Sep 8, 2026 at 10:01 AM.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 8/11/26 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jeremy Ray made a motion to approve the minutes from Business Meeting on 08-11-26.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Victoria Cohen	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
James Ford	Absent
Jim Handy	Aye
Jeremy Ray	Aye

II. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None were proposed.

III. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

The School Performance Committee met on September 1.

Staff reviewed the Panorama school climate survey results. For the first time, all nine schools met participation thresholds for every stakeholder group, and six of nine met or exceeded Performance Framework expectations for every group. Feedback and

coaching was the lowest-scoring area across the portfolio and is being addressed through professional development for school leaders. All schools will submit action plans in October.

MOXIE Public Schools opened on schedule with 131 students, above its enrollment goal, and its facility passed all required inspections.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on September 1st.

Staff presented the July 2026 financial report, the first month of FY27, which showed revenue and spending both slightly above projections.

After independent audits, four schools need minor changes to their FY25 financial metrics, and amendments to their 2024–25 Annual Monitoring Reports will come to the Commission for a vote.

C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on September 1st.

MOXIE Public Schools opened with 131 students, above its target of 120, and is now the Commission's tenth operating charter school.

The Committee discussed naming a new Finance Committee chair and possible candidates for Commission appointments.

The Committee reviewed the annual report and work plan, and planned the professional development session for the September 8 Commission meeting. It also agreed to pursue formal recognition of Norm Higgins' service to the Commission.

The Committee noted that the State Board of Education will meet at the Ecology Learning Center on December 10.

IV. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Judith Jones addressed the Commission during public comment regarding "Maine's Next Education Test," published in the Midcoast Villager on August 27, 2026.

V. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

There were no individual school updates this month.

B. Organizational Updates

Staff congratulated the schools on the start of the school year and thanked school leaders, staff and boards for their work welcoming students and families.

Staff reported that end-of-year meetings with all schools wrapped up in late August, and each school had both board and administrative representatives present. Staff use these meetings to add context to each school's data under the Performance Framework. The findings will go into the Annual Monitoring Reports, which will come to the Commission in November.

Staff also presented the 2026–27 annual calendar. The calendar lays out, month by month, how staff will carry out the Commission's four priorities: school leader development through the Accelerate Education partnership, policymaker engagement, supporting MOXIE Public Schools in its first year, and board, communications and public instrumentality work. It includes this year's major milestones, such as the upcoming renewals for CRCS and MeANS, and staff review progress against it every week. The Executive Committee reviewed the calendar, and staff made some changes based on its feedback.

C. Media Updates

Two articles - 'Planned center would expand STEM education across southern Maine' and 'Several Knox, Waldo County graduates among Class of 2026 at Maine Connections Academy' - were included in the packet for informational purposes. No discussion was held.

VI. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. SY2025-26 Year End Enrollment/Unenrollment

Staff presented a portfolio-wide comparison of student enrollment and unenrollment for SY2024-25 and SY2025-26, using monthly NEO data. Student persistence is measured in Performance Framework criteria 4.2 and 4.3:

- *Year-end enrollment grew from 2,003 to 2,073 students.*
- *The number of students who left fell from 504 to 463, which is 18.3% of students served, down from 20.1%.*
- *Schools kept enrolling students throughout the year: at least 111 joined after the October 1 count and stayed through June, most of them in January.*
- *Unenrollments peaked in June in both years. The largest change was in August, when departures fell from 85 to 32.*
- *Almost all students who left went to another school or to home schooling.*
- *Home schooling was the only destination that grew, from 115 to 141 students.*

- *School-level reports are available for any school on request.*

VII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Receive and Place on File the SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report Financial Metrics Addendums

Jeremy Ray made a motion to receive and place on file the SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Report Financial Addendums.
James Ford seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Jeremy Ray	Aye
Victoria Cohen	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye

Addendums to the 2024–25 Annual Monitoring Reports for four schools - Community Regional Charter School, Ecology Learning Center, Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences, and Maine Arts Academy - were presented for review and consideration.

Annual Monitoring Reports score financial metrics using each school's internally prepared fourth-quarter financials. Once the FY25 independent audits were complete, staff recalculated the metrics. An addendum was prepared for each school where the audited figures changed a risk rating on the Performance Framework:

- ***CRCS:** current ratio and financial obligations coverage moved from low to moderate risk.*
- ***ELC:** three-year margin improved from moderate to low risk, and two-year cash flow improved from high to low risk.*
- ***Fiddlehead:** current ratio moved from low to moderate risk.*
- ***Maine Arts Academy:** financial obligations coverage moved from low to moderate risk.*

Staff and the Commission's finance consultant, Joseph Drago, described the changes as routine audit true-ups rather than concerns. Most scores were unchanged, the shifts were small, and ELC's financial picture improved. Some differences may come from auditors classifying items differently than the schools did, and staff will look into this further.

Chair Langley noted that addendums like these are issued every year to bring the records in line with audited actuals. Mr. Drago added that the data is from 2024–25 and does not reflect the schools' current financial positions.

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

A. New Governing Board Members

The Commission received notice that Maine Academy of Natural Sciences has appointed Patty Duffy to its board of directors, and that Maine Connections Academy has appointed Angela Lallier.

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board

Lisa Coombs resigned from the Maine Connections Academy governing board.

C. Board Member Term Outs

None reported.

IX. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

The following future topics were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held.

October

- To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Application
- To Consider the Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Renewal Application

November

- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report

December

- NO MEETING

X. Announcements

A. Important Dates

The following professional development opportunities were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held:

• *Tuesday, September 8th (12:30-2:30pm)/Commission PD - "Launching The Year -*

Authorizing, Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan"/In Person (Maine Virtual Academy, Ballard
Center, 6 East Chestnut Street, Augusta)
• Wednesday, September 23rd (10:00am-12:00pm)/Panorama PD - "Launching the Year Right"/Zoom
• Thursday, October 22nd (10:00-11:30am)/BoardOnTrack PD - "Governance and Fiduciary
Duties"/Zoom
• Thursday, November 5th (10:00-11:30am)/PLT Strategies - "Communications and Advocacy
101"/Zoom

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

The following upcoming Business Meeting dates were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held.

- Tuesday, October 13th (10:00am-12:00pm) - Location TBD
- Tuesday, November 10th (10:00am-12:00pm) - Location TBD
- Tuesday, January 12th (10:00am-12:00pm) - Location TBD

XI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Allen

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funds, and employing its own staff — while remaining a public body that performs essential government functions and stays accountable to the State.

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Application

Section:	X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance
Item:	A. To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Application
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Renewal Application - Community Regional Charter School-redacted.pdf CRCS_Renewal_Site_Visit_Report.docx.pdf CRCS Charter Renewal Report - Year 4.docx (1).pdf

2026 Renewal Application

Organization Name	**Community Regional Charter School**
Primary Contact Name	**Travis Works**
Title	**Executive Director**
E-Mail Address	**tworks@crcsme.org**
Telephone Number	**207-399-6502**
Fax Number	**207-474-8515**
Street Address	**48 South Factory Street**
City	**Skowhegan**
State	**Maine**
Zip Code	**04976**

Renewal Application Certification

Signature of Board Chair: Theresa L. Overall Date: 9/3/2026

Signature of School Leader: Travis Works Date: 9/4/2026

Organization Information

Name of School	Community Regional Charter School
Year Opened	2012
Student on Waiting List	4
Maximum Enrollment (current charter)	455 + 10% = 500
Current Enrollment (SY2026-27)	340

Current Grade Levels Served

☑ PreK	☑ 4th	☑ 9th
☑ KG	☑ 5th	☑ 10th
☑ 1st	☑ 6th	☑ 11th
☑ 2nd	☑ 7th	☑ 12th
☑ 3rd	☑ 8th	

Based on Current (SY2026-27) Enrollment

Number of Male Students	191
Number of Female Students	149
Number of White Students	316
Number of Black or African American Students	2
Number of Hispanic/Latino Students	5
Number of Asian Students	0
Number of Other Students	17
Number of Students with Disabilities	104
Number of Multilingual Learners	0
Number of Homeless Students	1
Number of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	245

Provide a brief description of the school, including an overview of the mission and vision, educational program, community and local connections, leadership and governance.

Community Regional Charter School (CRCS), the first elementary public charter school approved by the State of Maine, opened in 2012 with only 60 learners. Today, CRCS serves between 350 and 400 learners in PreK–12 from more than 50 surrounding communities. Over the past several years, we have become a vibrant and active school through a strong spirit of community and volunteerism.

CRCS is an ungraded, proficiency-based PreK–12 public charter school serving central Maine across three campuses. We live by our mission: “Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused.” Our academic model uses flexible groupings based on learner readiness and learning targets rather than grade level. We design instruction around learner interests and clearly defined proficiency expectations. Our community-connected, interdisciplinary approach makes academic content relevant and meaningful.

CRCS provides a traditional Carnegie-style transcript built entirely upon proficiency-based data. This is an extremely unique feature of our model and has historically been a barrier for schools seeking to implement Mass Customized Learning. Although seminars and interdisciplinary learning opportunities are not unique within education, CRCS has removed many of the traditional structures that can prevent the implementation of truly customized seminars.

Self-regulation—and helping learners understand what they need, when they need it, and how to advocate for those needs—is critical. We have developed the concept of “Open Campus” during the traditional lunch and recess period. For one hour each day, learners may choose when to eat, when to go outside, and how to move flexibly between indoor and outdoor spaces. This time gives learners the autonomy to understand what their bodies need and to practice advocating for those needs. These skills are critical to human development and transfer to other parts of the school day, helping learners recognize and communicate what they need in mathematics, literacy, seminars, and other learning environments.

We provide garden-based education, outdoor education, experiential learning opportunities, and Design Thinking experiences supported by technology.

CRCS believes that knowledge does not fall neatly into separate categories or disciplines. Whenever possible, teaching and learning occur within contexts that are relevant to learners’ lives. Providing learners with voice and choice increases learner engagement. When appropriate, learning opportunities are integrated across multiple disciplines.

At CRCS, we believe in creating a community-centered, uncompromisingly learner-focused environment in which success is the only option. We strive to create the ideal learning experience for every learner by customizing education around individual needs. This commitment extends beyond our educational programming to the development of an atmosphere centered on community and belonging, with communication and transparency at its core.

CRCS is a member of the Collaborative for Customized Learning, formerly known as the Maine Cohort for Customized Learning, and uses curriculum targets and language similar to those used by other schools throughout Maine. We offer a proficiency-based diploma that does not negatively affect our learners’ eligibility for scholarships or college admission. CRCS opened as Maine’s first elementary public charter school, initially serving Grades K–8, and later expanded to become Maine’s only PreK–12 public charter

school. We remain committed to customizing learning opportunities while ensuring that every learner receives a rigorous education that prepares them for future success.

We believe—and demonstrate through our educational model—that learners learn at their own pace and in their own ways. Educators have long attempted to customize learning within individual classrooms, and examples of this work can be found in schools throughout the country. CRCS customizes learning systemwide, removing the traditional walls that can prevent learners from receiving instruction at the level at which they are ready to learn.

For example, a learner who needs to work on adding fractions with unlike denominators can receive instruction from a facilitator offering that content, while a peer works with another facilitator who is focusing on measurement and volume. Our facilitators are not confined to teaching only one classroom or grade-level group. They work across instructional groupings throughout the school so that learners can receive the instruction they need. Our schedule and resources are designed to allow facilitators to focus on what is most important: individualizing learning for our learners.

We describe this approach as “Mass Customized Learning” because we are truly customizing learning for a large and diverse group of learners rather than applying a cookie-cutter approach:

“Mass Customized Learning is about the implementation of a school structure that makes it possible to meet the individual and personal needs of learners simultaneously every hour of every day. Every learner, every day, comes to school and is met at his/her specific learning level, is challenged, is successful, and looks forward to returning to school tomorrow.” —Bea McGarvey and Chuck Schwan

The MCCL Curriculum Model in figure 1 illustrates how CRCS brings together critical-thinking skills, content knowledge, and lifelong habits of mind to develop reflective, self-directed learners and collaborative workers.

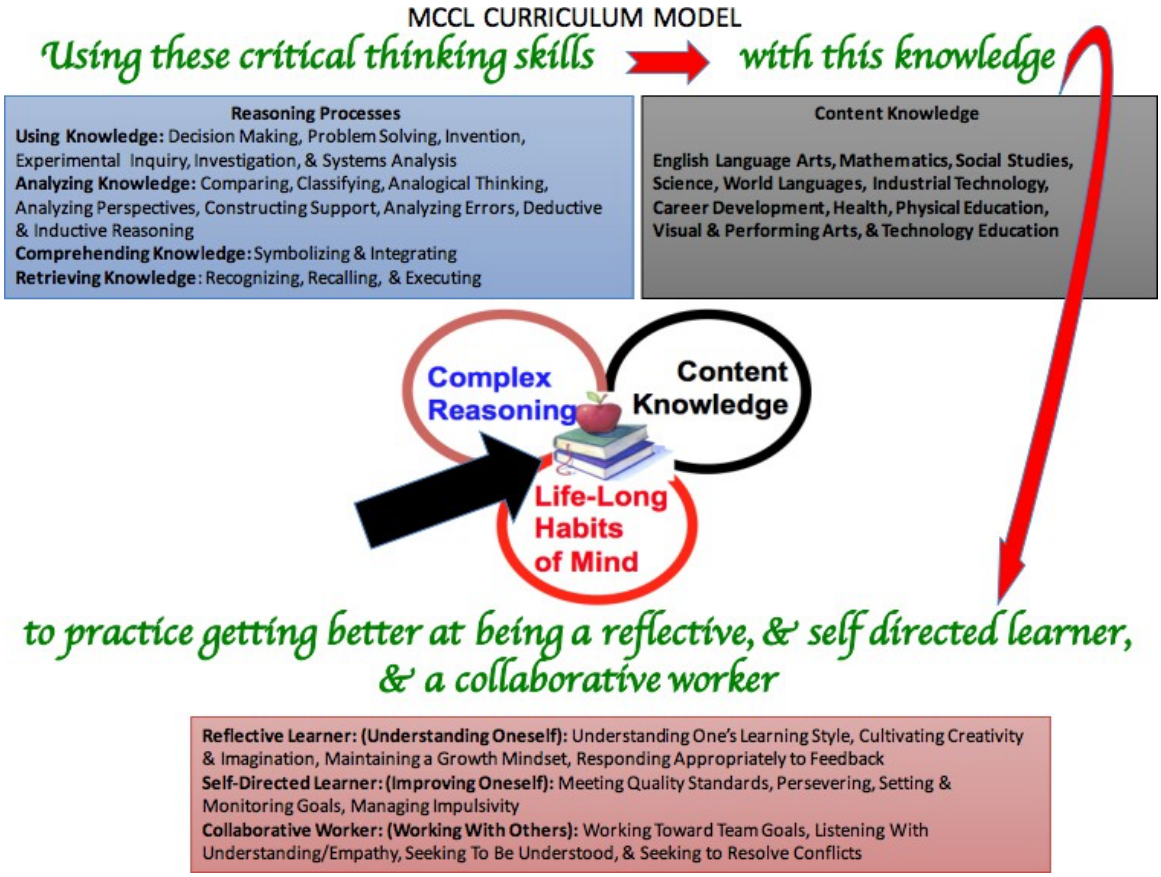


Figure 1: *from the Cohort for Customized Learning*

Vision for the Future

During the next charter term, CRCS will preserve the distinctive features of its community-centered, proficiency-based educational model while strengthening consistency, accountability, and sustainability across its three campuses. The school will focus on accelerating mathematics growth and proficiency through a Governing Board-approved Mathematics Improvement Plan, maintaining the progress achieved in literacy and school climate, improving the documentation and measurement of mission-specific practices, and continuing to address long-term facilities and leadership capacity. CRCS will remain committed to providing rigorous, customized learning opportunities that meet learners socially, emotionally, and academically while preparing them for success beyond graduation.

Looking Back: The Record of Performance

This section provides an opportunity to supplement or augment the performance record. Schools should use the Renewal Performance Report as a guide for their responses and submit only evidence of performance related to the Performance Framework that is not included in the Renewal Performance Report and/or that the authorizer may not have. Responses should reference the specific criteria and benchmarks in the Performance Framework to which the information applies. Responses may include, but are not limited to, information about interim assessments or progress reports; evidence of performance on school- or mission-specific goals; and describe improvements undertaken at the school; and evidence of progress for any areas in which the school has not previously met or is not currently meeting the performance standard.

Responses should focus on information or evidence relevant to the school's academic, financial, and organizational performance and the school's performance expectations as defined by the authorizer's Performance Framework and the school's charter contract.

Renewal Recommendations will be based on all evidence of school performance in the record, including but not limited to, the school's responses in this section.

1. Academic Performance
    a. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether the school has met its performance expectations.
    b. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
    c. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract (if not already captured in Renewal Performance Report.
2. Financial Performance
    a. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.
    b. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates regarding the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework ,measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
3. Organizational Performance
    a. Provide any organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliance or other updates relevant to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
    b. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.

Academic Performance

1. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether or not the school has met its performance expectations.

In the 2025–26 school year, CRCS improved on several of the 2024–25 framework concerns—especially reading proficiency, graduation/college readiness, family/student climate, board training, reporting timeliness, and persistence. Mathematics growth and proficiency remain the central concern, particularly for Dimensions math growth and several Overman subgroups. Although we have seen areas of improvement, current results demonstrate that mathematics must be the most urgent academic priority during the next charter term.

Academic Proficiency:

Measure	2024–25 benchmark/result	2025–26 results	Comparison and renewal interpretation
Dimensions reading proficiency	**Not Meeting.** Grade 3: 21%; Grade 4: 19%; Grade 5: 37%. Overall 38% reported in the school's reflection.	**49%** overall, 43/87. Grade 3: 60%; Grade 4: 36%; Grade 5: 41%.	Clear improvement overall. Reading moved from a major concern to a more credible area of progress, though Grade 4 and Grade 5 require continued support.
Overman reading proficiency	**Approaching.** Grade 6: 71%; Grade 7: 44%; Grade 8: 35%; Grade 10: 40%.	**46%** overall, 34/74. Grade 6: 61%; Grade 7: 72%; Grade 8: 18%; Grade 10: 45%.	Mixed but broadly positive: Grade 7 and Grade 10 improved, Grade 6 remains near benchmark, and Grade 8 is the urgent reading concern.
Dimensions math proficiency	**Not Meeting.** Grade 3: 29%; Grade 4: 6%; Grade 5: 22%.	**23%** overall, 20/87. Grade 3: 25%; Grade 4: 41%; Grade 5: 18%.	Still not meeting. Grade 4 improved sharply, but Grade 3 and Grade 5 declined or remain low. This supports a schoolwide elementary math condition rather than a narrow grade-specific response.
Overman math proficiency	**Not Meeting.** Grade 6: 25%; Grade 7: 4%; Grade 8: 6%; Grade 10: 17%.	**25%** overall, 19/76. Grade 6: 25%; Grade 7: 34%; Grade 8: 10%; Grade 10: 36%.	Meaningful improvement in Grades 7 and 10; Grades 6 and 8 remain low. The overall result remains too low, but the grade-level pattern supports the argument that targeted changes can work.

Academic Growth:

Measure	2024–25 result/rating	2025–26 CRCS result	Change and interpretation
Dimensions reading growth	**52%, Meeting**	**57%, Meeting/Exceeding threshold depending on final framework cut point**	Improved by 5 points; a clear positive result.
Dimensions math growth	**53%, Meeting**	**30%, Not Meeting**	Declined substantially. This is the strongest evidence for the proposed math condition.
Overman reading growth	**31%, Not Meeting**	**46%, Meeting**	Improved by 15 points and now reaches the meeting threshold.
Overman math growth	**32%, Not Meeting**	**37%, Approaching** strict result; **50%** with standard error	Improved by 5 points using the strict measure; still not meeting the "meeting" threshold on strict growth.
District customization—reading, within standard error	**62%, Meeting**	Dimensions 77%; Overman 62%	Strong growth-context evidence, especially at Dimensions.
District customization—math, within standard error	**63%, Meeting**	Dimensions 45%; Overman 50%	Significant decline; confirms math must be the priority.
District customization—language, within standard error	**66%, Meeting**	Dimensions 74%; Overman 64%	Maintained/improved overall strength.

As part of this renewal cycle, CRCS is proposing accountable conditions supported by an action plan focused specifically on accelerating mathematics growth and proficiency while maintaining the progress achieved in literacy. CRCS will implement a Governing Board-approved Mathematics Improvement Plan and report its progress to the Maine Charter School Commission according to an agreed-upon schedule. The plan will include measurable outcome targets, implementation milestones, subgroup monitoring, and evidence of instructional fidelity.

Evidence of Progress and Current Strengths

1. CRCS has shown positive academic trends, especially in reading and college readiness.
    - CRCS increased reading growth at both academies: Dimensions rose from 52% to 57% meeting projected NWEA growth, and Overman rose from 31% to 46%.
    - CRCS improved reading proficiency overall at both academies: Dimensions reported 49% at or above state expectation, and Overman reported 46%.
    - Evidence that midyear math changes produced early gains, which will propel math growth during the coming school year.
        - At Dimensions, the school introduced specific mathematics SMART goals in February 2026, increased the precision of RIT-band grouping, and emphasized algebraic reasoning. Across all five reported grade levels, Winter-to-Spring goal attainment was stronger than Fall-to-Spring goal attainment. For example, Grade 4 rose from 23.5% to 52.9% and Grade 3 from 15.0% to 36.8% in comparable goal-attainment measures.

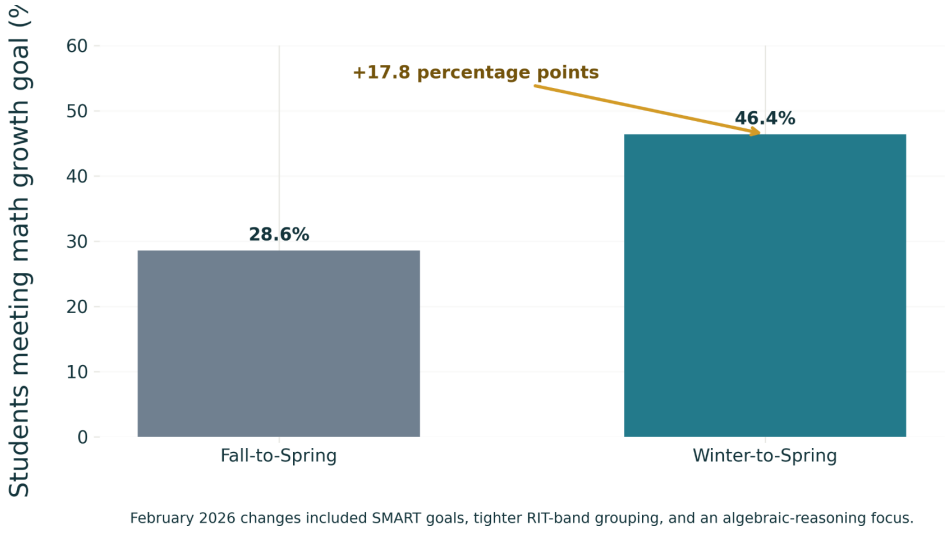
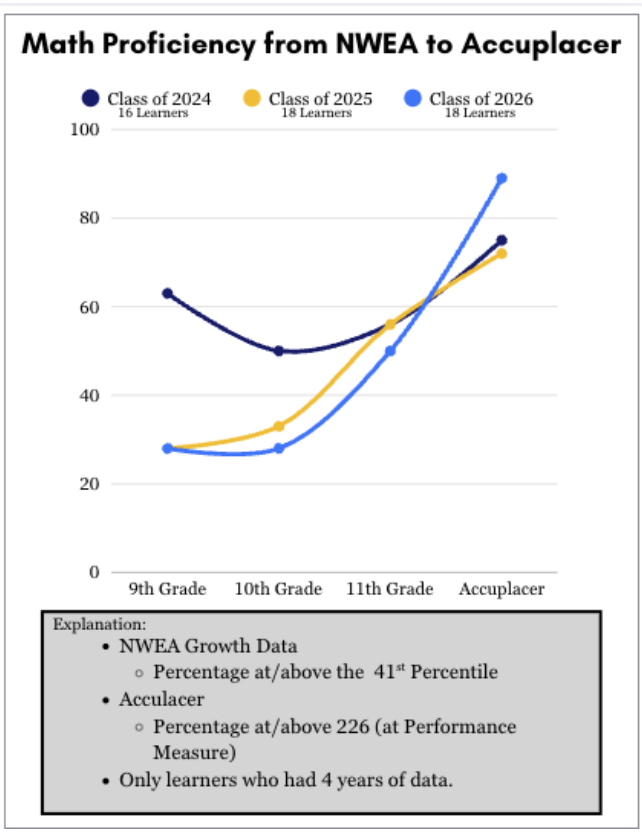


Figure 2

- CRCS sustained very strong graduation outcomes: 96% of the current four-year cohort graduated.
- College readiness has improved. The proficiency level of graduates has steadily increased in both reading and math. The graphs below show how the past 3 graduating classes have demonstrated proficiency on the NWEA and at their final assessment, the Accuplacer. In Figure 3 below, you will see the number of learners scoring at or above proficiency on their 9th, 10th and 11th grade NWEA and the final assessment, the Accuplacer.



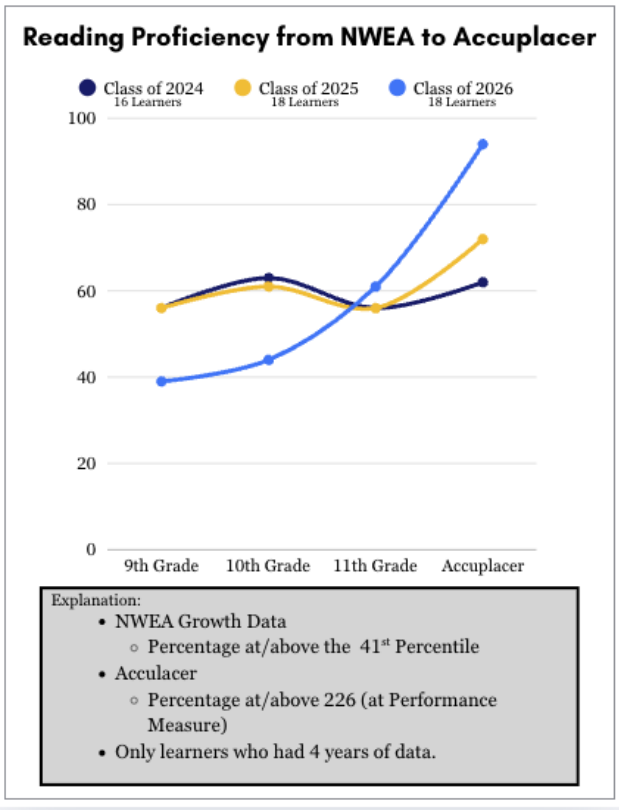


Figure 3

- Given that our learners are not grouped by grade level, the Accuplacer and Graduation rates illustrate that learners are prepared for their next step beyond high school. Nevertheless, it may not show up on the grade level assessments prior to their last 2 years of high school.

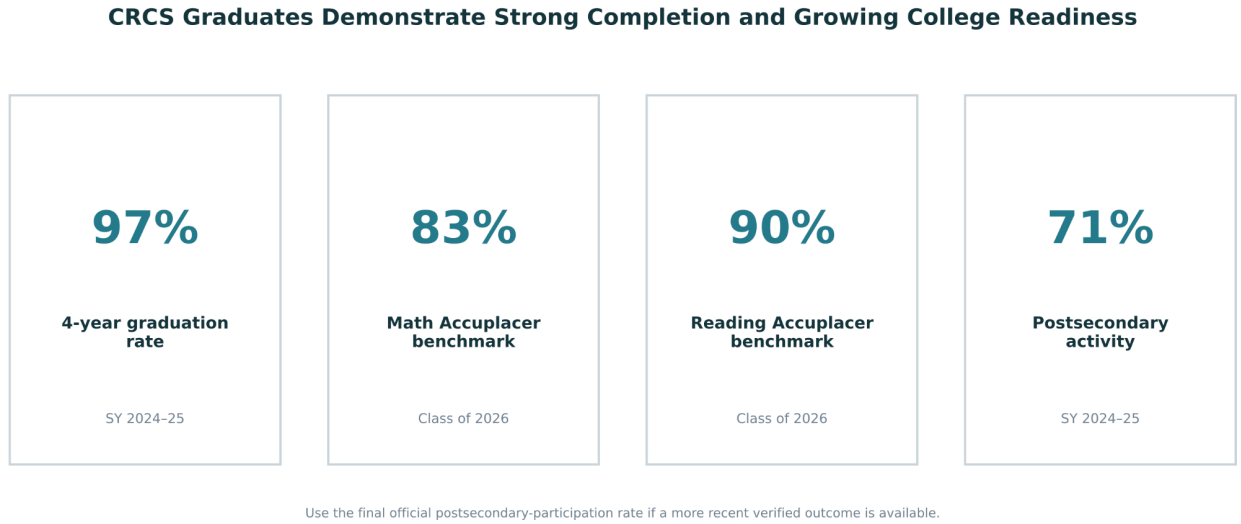


Figure 4

Measure	2024–25 result	2025–26 result	Renewal significance
4-year graduation	97%, Exceeding	96%, 27/28, Exceeding	Sustained high performance.
Accuplacer reading	76%, Meeting	90%, 27/30, Exceeding	Major improvement.
Accuplacer math	76%, Meeting	83%, 25/30, Meeting	Meaningful improvement.

In closing, CRCS's 2025–26 academic results do not establish that the school has fully resolved its mathematics challenges. They do, however, provide evidence that CRCS can identify a weakness, adjust practice, and produce measurable short-cycle improvement. CRCS will treat the previously mentioned gains as early implementation evidence rather than as a final outcome. The school will use the next charter term to establish a more coherent and consistent mathematics system across academies, grades, and student groups.

2. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records.* Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

Mathematics Improvement Conditions

CRCS requests a charter renewal with conditions focused on mathematics improvement. The school will implement a board-approved Mathematics Improvement Plan and report progress to the Maine Charter School Commission according to an agreed-upon schedule. The plan will include measurable outcome targets, implementation milestones, subgroup monitoring, and evidence of instructional fidelity.
**See attached document uploaded to Epicenter.*

Implementation Capacity

CRCS is positioned to implement this plan and see positive results because the necessary systems are already in operation and will be strengthened rather than created from scratch. The school has established data cycles using NWEA MAP Growth, Maine Through Year results, local formative evidence, and protected recurring staff professional-development time.

Our successful implementation of our CRCS Mathematics Improvement Plan hinges on our strong systems of leadership, governance, progress monitoring, instructional capacity, and operational capacity. The CRCS Mathematics Improvement Plan will formalize these systems for mathematics through a common scope and sequence, documented intervention decision rules, scheduled progress monitoring, coaching cycles, and board-level review of quarterly mathematics progress and updates. CRCS recognizes that its flexible, ungraded structures must be paired with consistent expectations, instructional routines, and evidence of fidelity across academies.

CRCS continues to improve.

- We made the gains we needed in literacy - proving we have the tools and skills to make the changes in mathematics.
    - Our CRCS literacy work was strengthened through Science of Reading, i-Ready, vocabulary instruction, and a more systematic MTSS approach.
    - Instructional staffing is relatively stable going into 2026/2027
- Attendance improvement equals more time learners are in classes receiving instruction
- Dimensions Academy and Overman Academy have Building Principals that teach part of the day, while serving as Instructional Coaches. This model is deliberate because they serve as “Player Coaches”, who are active practitioners. In addition, this year we added Shared Leadership Partners, who also teach part of the day, but share administrative responsibilities and support the Building Principals. The third prong for the leadership in each building is the Dean of Learners. Between all three positions, they work in tandem to provide support for staff, learners, and families in a shared leadership model. It is critical for the Building Principal not to be isolated to a management role, which is why our model looks at the position as an instructional leader who can serve as a colleague and leader at the same time.
- We have funds for math professional development, coaching, and instructional resources through Tier III and Title II

3. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract (*if not already captured in Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report*).

CRCS organizes learning by readiness and proficiency rather than relying solely on age-based grade placement. Learners receive flexible grouping, individualized academic goals, Learning Coach support, and opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in multiple ways. This structure is intended to meet

learners at their current level while maintaining access to grade-level content and providing clear pathways toward proficiency.

Learner voice and choice are central to CRCS's educational model. The seminar catalog (approximate grades 3-12) provides thematic and interdisciplinary pathways through which learners that are "reading to learn", opposed to "learning read" can work toward common academic targets while selecting learning experiences that reflect their interests. Each seminar rotation creates new opportunities to connect academic content to authentic experiences.

Our elementary seminar model brings our mission—**"community-centered, uncompromisingly learner focused"**—to life by creating a common academic framework without creating a one-size-fits-all learning experience. The school year is organized into five rotations, and each rotation identifies a small number of power targets in mathematics and literacy that represent the essential learning we want all learners to develop. These power targets provide consistency and coherence across the building, while grade-level standards and developmental progressions help facilitators determine what proficiency looks like for each individual learner.

What makes the model distinctly learner focused is that **the targets are consistent, but the pathways to reaching them are not.** Facilitators design interdisciplinary seminars around engaging themes, authentic questions, projects, community connections, and learner interests. During the same rotation, one learner might develop measurement and literacy skills through a seminar about animals and microscopes, while another explores those competencies through architecture, engineering, nature, or design. Learners have meaningful voice and choice in the context through which they learn, while facilitators intentionally customize instruction, scaffolds, texts, tasks, and expectations according to readiness.

Our ungraded, proficiency-based structure further allows us to focus on where a learner is in their learning progression rather than allowing age or grade placement alone to dictate instruction. A common power target can be accessed at very different levels of complexity: one learner may be comparing and measuring objects with concrete tools while another applies measurement concepts to scale, area, volume, or a design challenge. Similarly, learners may work toward the same broad literacy competency using texts, vocabulary, writing expectations, and supports appropriate to their current level of readiness.

The result is a deliberate balance between guaranteed learning and genuine personalization. We are not offering choice at the expense of academic coherence, nor are we requiring standardization at the expense of learner agency. Instead, our rotation framework establishes what matters most, connects those priorities to grade-level expectations and individual proficiency, and then creates multiple meaningful pathways for learners to demonstrate growth and mastery.

Science, social studies, health, the arts, technology, and other disciplines are intentionally woven into seminar themes, allowing academic skills to be learned in meaningful contexts rather than as isolated

subjects. Community resources, local issues, experts, field experiences, and authentic audiences can further extend learning beyond the classroom.

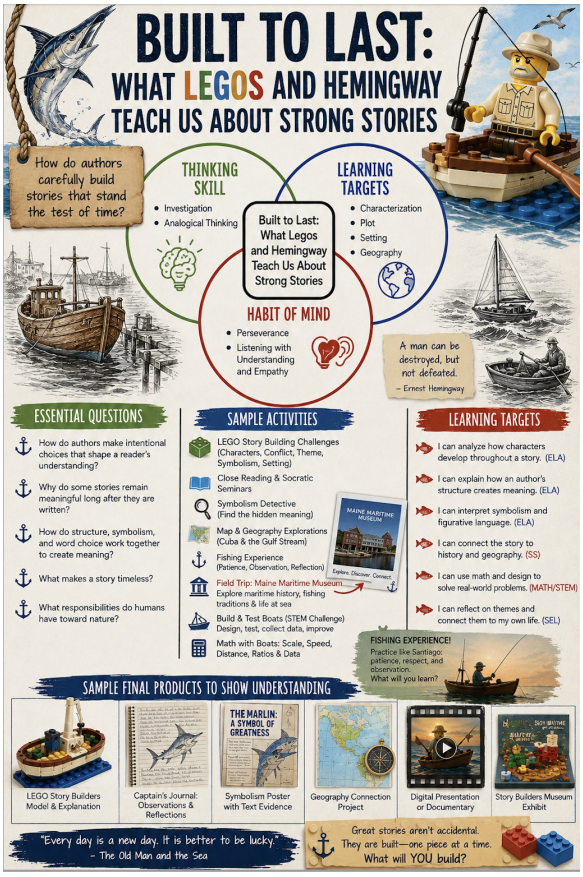
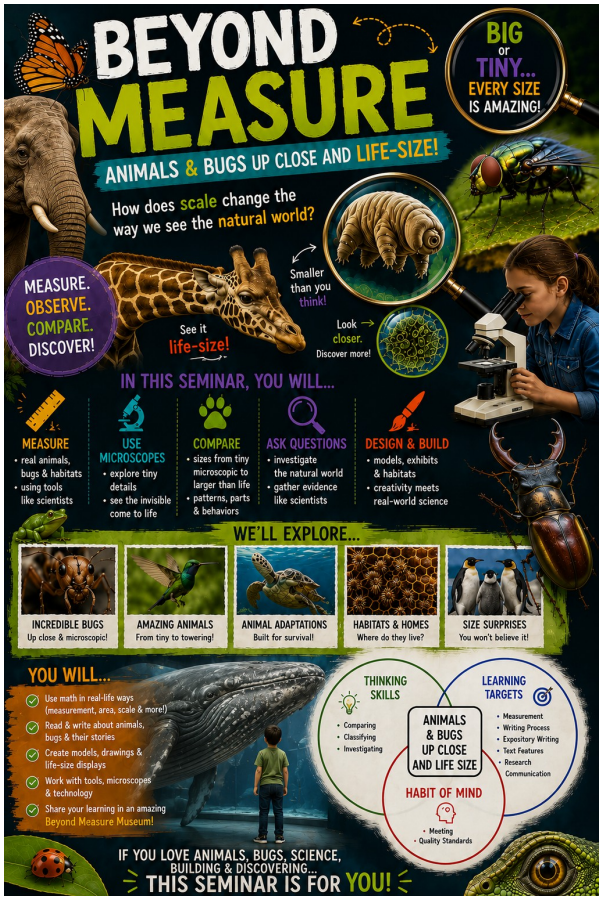
	Learners have at least four choices on how they would like to learn math and literacy concepts at CRCS Dimensions Academy, at the "Reading to Learn" stage.	
Power Targets Focused on Story Elements, Craft & Structure, Geometric Measurement		

Figure 5a: Example of Catalog Offerings at CRCS Dimensions

At the Overman campus, using a combination of different ways to offer learners voice and choice, group structure is adjusted based on academic need. For instance, RIT-band data is used to help identify appropriate groups for math within learner chosen seminars. The seminar catalog highlights thematic approaches to attaining similar mathematics goals, while offering learners opportunities for voice and choice. Each new rotation offers new ways to connect math to real experiences. Integrating evidence-based math and CTE curriculum, Integrating Pathways to Careers into the seminar provides learners with common language and strategies they internalize and will continue to be useful as they build upon their knowledge in future seminars.

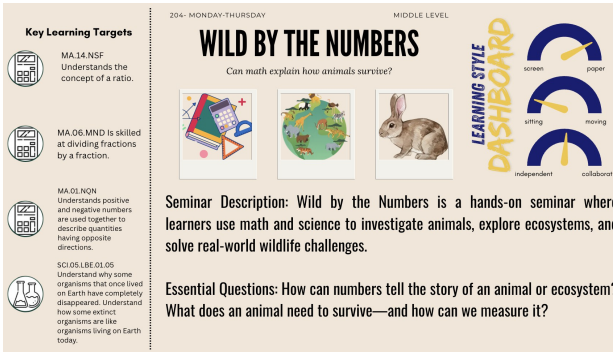
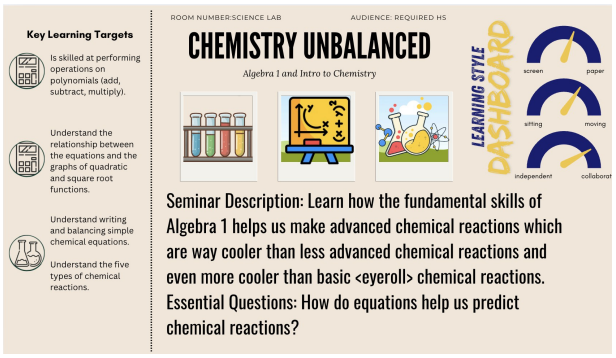
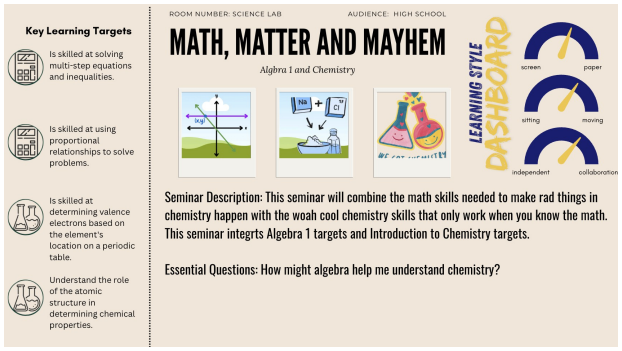
	Learners have at least two choices on how they would like to learn math concepts at CRCS Overman Academy.	
Targets in Pre-Algebra		
Algebra 1 to Algebra 2 Targets		

Figure 5b: Example of Catalog Offerings for Math at CRCS Overman

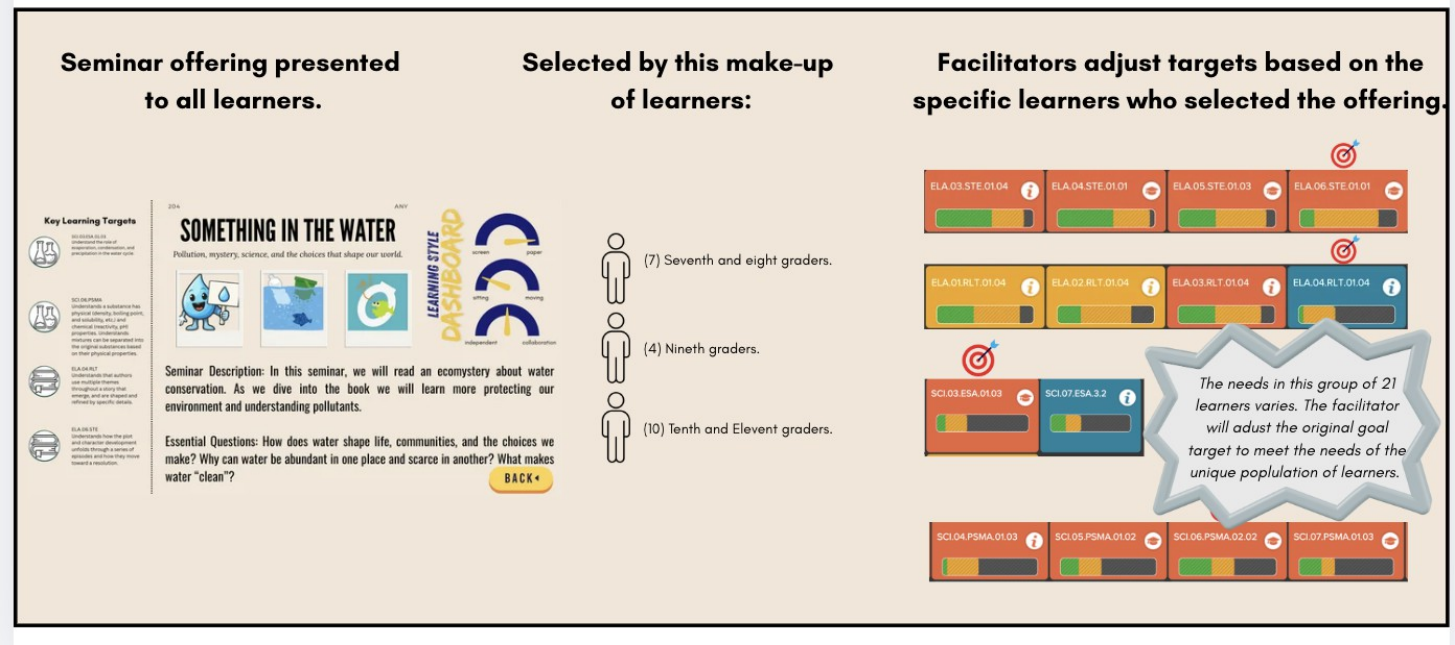


Figure 6: How facilitators zero in on the needs of a group after learners are offered choice.

Grouping learners by interest is another way we offer voice and choice at CRCS. This is commonly applied in the humanities, where facilitators offer multi-content area seminars and learners in all grades can participate. Our science offerings are often thematic and interdisciplinary, as well, integrating literacy and numeracy skills. Facilitators use a backward planning model to meet learner needs after rosters for the seminar are created.

Despite how learners are showing proficiency on targets, they are earning credits in a similar way to their peers at other schools. Targets are compiled to fill "buckets" which make up credits. One big difference, learners do not earn a credit unless they prove proficiency over time on each individual target. In a traditional system, schools issue credits for averages as low as 65%. With a standards based model, credits are not earned unless more than 80% of the targets are at a 3. So in many ways, CRCS is more rigorous than schools using a traditional model of grading. See figure 7 for an explanation.

[Figure 7 redacted by the Maine Charter School Commission to protect confidential student education records.]

Figure 7: Comparison of a traditional grading system and the CRCS transcript.

Despite the differences in our transcript, learners have graduated and moved on to college programs and earned scholarships without difficulty.

Here are a few highlights that demonstrate how we are creating opportunities that align with our mission and move us closer to achieving our vision:

- We encourage learners to speak up and play an active role in our school community. Several key pieces of our culture are managed and/or created by learners. These opportunities include the Learner Leadership Team, Showcase Band, Chorus, RavenCon (game night that builds community), and Downtown Detox (learner created elective that received recognition for the positive impact on Skowhegan.)
- Learners have had the opportunity to learn from Skowhegan Outdoors through a partnership pursued by and fostered by Casie Guillow, a CRCS Outdoors Education facilitator who works with learners on both the Dimensions and Overman campuses. In the 2025–26 school year, this resulted in 133.5 outdoors hours spent by Overman learners. 24 learners participated in various

activities and programs with Outdoors Club that led to two overnight camping trips (Teens to Trails and Maine Huts and Trails), seven community collaborations, 22 different activities offered through all four seasons, and 15 hours of community stewardship. One learner participated in 131.5 of those total hours. Mrs. Guillow received a special recognition from Somerset Health for her efforts in community health education through Outdoors Club. These opportunities extended learning beyond the traditional classroom while strengthening learner relationships, independence, collaboration, and connections with the broader community.

- RavenWorks is our on-campus art, design, and fabrication studio that functions as a problem solving space for learners, staff, and soon, families and community members. Built around a nationally-recognized model developed by our Director of Design and Innovation, Dan Ryder. The RavenWorks supports users by providing both the Compass and the Canvas. RavenWorks helps learners and staff find mindful direction, access resources, and develop skills, while also being a place to create, build, make, and grow. Learners may access RavenWorks and its resources throughout the day through a simple pass system. Two staff members are available to support users with everything from 3D printing and laser engraving to fiber arts and watercolor painting. whether it be for personal projects, demonstrating evidence of learning, or both.

CRCS's community-centered model is evident in authentic learning experiences and partnerships. During the 2025–26 school year, Dimensions Academy represented Somerset County in WinterKids and partnered with Somerset Public Health, Somerset Woods Trustees, and additional community guests. WinterKids activities were integrated with the curriculum and connected to identified learning targets, allowing learners to apply academic knowledge and skills through authentic experiences. Dimensions Academy finished second in the WinterKids competitive track.

Flexible grouping, interdisciplinary seminars, learner-led opportunities, community partnerships, experiential learning, and positive climate results distinguish the CRCS model and reinforce its commitment to being Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused.

In the ways mentioned, our seminar model reflects the heart of our charter: community-centered in where learning happens and whom it connects learners to, and uncompromisingly learner focused in how, when, and through what pathways each learner develops proficiency. The destination is clear; the pathway is customized.

During the next charter term, CRCS will strengthen the consistency with which these mission-specific practices are implemented and measured across campuses. The school will continue documenting learner access, participation, academic progress, movement through learning pathways, and responses to intervention so that mission implementation can be evaluated through both program evidence and measurable learner outcomes.

Panorama Results:

Measure	2024–25 result	2025–26 result	Renewal significance
Family Panorama participation	Framework strength; scales at climate 70th/safety 50th/school fit 60th percentiles	81% participation; climate 70th, safety 80th, school fit 80th percentile	Strong participation and a stronger family-safety result.
Dimensions student climate	Not Meeting: only safety was above 50th percentile	91.1% participation; climate 90th, safety 80th, rigorous expectations 70th, teacher-student relationships 90th percentile	Major turnaround and one of CRCS's strongest evidence-of-response stories.
Overman student climate	Exceeding: 99th/99th/90th/99th percentile	78.4% participation; 80th/70th/50th/60th percentile	Still meets/exceeds all required scales but declined; monitor to prevent backsliding.

Panorama survey results provide measurable evidence of the community-centered portion of CRCS's mission. The 2025–26 family survey received 128 responses. Family results placed school climate at the 70th percentile and both school safety and school fit at the 80th percentile.

Dimensions Academy demonstrated substantial improvement in learner climate results. With 91.1% participation, Dimensions reached the 90th percentile for school climate and teacher–student relationships, the 80th percentile for safety, and the 70th percentile for rigorous expectations. This represents a significant improvement from 2024–25, when only the safety measure exceeded the 50th percentile, and provides strong evidence that focused attention to culture and relationships produced measurable results.

Overman Academy continued to meet or exceed expectations across the required climate measures, with 78.4% participation. Results placed school climate at the 80th percentile, safety at the 70th percentile, rigorous expectations at the 50th percentile, and teacher–student relationships at the 60th percentile. Although these results remained positive, they declined from the exceptionally high levels reported in 2024–25. CRCS will continue monitoring these measures and responding proactively to prevent further decline.

Financial Performance

1. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.

   Please see attached "Statement of Financial Assurance: Current Liabilities" at end of document.

2. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records*. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates regarding the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

   All financial performance-related evidence has been captured in quarterly financials, budget projections and financial audits previously submitted to the authorizer.

Organizational Performance

1. Provide any organizational performance=related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records*. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliant or other updates relevant to the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

Improved Board Metrics:

Measure	2024–25 result	2025–26 result	Renewal significance
Board training	71%, Not Meeting	100%	Clear corrective-action success.
Reporting on time	91%, Exceeding	100%	Improved and fully compliant.
Reporting accuracy	100%	100%	Sustained strength.
Board meetings	12 meetings	10 regular plus 3 special meetings	Strong governance activity; ensured agendas/minutes were posted in a timely fashion

2. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.

   There are no school-established organizational goals that have not been previously shared with the Commission.

Looking to the Future

This section provides the opportunity to detail the school's plans for the next charter term. Consistent with NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, the authorizer will make its renewal decisions based on the school's track record of performance, and not on promises of future performance or improvement. Responses to the questions in this section will not be the basis for the authorizer's decision for renewal or non-renewal unless information is provided, or a significant, anticipated change or material modification is proposed which, if not approved, would endanger the future success and sustainability of the school. Any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model, and financial outlook and any proposed material modifications to the school's current charter contract must be proposed below and are subject to approval by the authorizer consistent with authorizer policy and state law. Failure to provide Maine Charter School Commission - Renewal Process Review and Recommendations requested or otherwise relevant information or failure to propose a material modification that is likely to impact the school's academic or organizational success, or its financial sustainability shall be grounds for non-renewal and termination of the school's charter. If the school has any questions about whether information or a proposed change should be included, please contact the authorizer prior to submission of this application. If the school is proposing a material modification that, if not approved, would not endanger the sustainability of the school, this should be noted in the response and an explanation provided.

Proposed Grade Levels to be Served

☑ PreK	☑ 4th	☑ 9th
☑ KG	☑ 5th	☑ 10th
☑ 1st	☑ 6th	☑ 11th
☑ 2nd	☑ 7th	☑ 12th
☑ 3rd	☑ 8th	

Maximum projected enrollment at full growth for upcoming charter term, if renewed: 420 with current building structure.

Adjustments to the Performance Framework, if any

1. Describe and state the rationale for any proposed changes in targets for the performance indicators as stated in the existing contract.

CRCS proposes adding a Mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) indicator to the Performance Framework beginning in SY 2026–27. The proposed target is a median NWEA MAP Mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile of at least the 50th percentile for eligible learners at Dimensions Academy and Overman Academy, measured from fall to spring.

This proposed measure will supplement, rather than replace, the Maine Through Year proficiency measures and existing NWEA growth-goal measures. CRCS recognizes that current mathematics proficiency remains below expectations and that learners must make accelerated progress to

close gaps. The proposed indicator will allow CRCS and the Commission to evaluate growth in a manner that accounts for a learner's starting achievement level, grade, and instructional time. A CGP of 50 indicates that a learner's growth exceeded that of 50% of academically similar peers in NWEA's national norm group.

The target is particularly appropriate for CRCS's ungraded, proficiency-based model, which serves learners entering at a wide range of readiness levels and uses flexible grouping and personalized learning pathways. It will provide a common, transparent measure of whether the model is producing at least typical growth for learners with comparable starting points.

CRCS will report results separately for Dimensions and Overman, by grade band, and by reportable student groups. The school will use its quarterly Mathematics Improvement Plan updates to identify groups with median CGPs below the 40th percentile, describe the data review conducted, and document responsive instructional changes, intervention supports, and progress-monitoring plans. This additional indicator will strengthen—not reduce—accountability for the school's mathematics outcomes.

> **Proposed Performance Framework Indicator: Mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile:** Beginning in SY 2026–27, CRCS will achieve a **median NWEA MAP Mathematics Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) of at least 50** for eligible learners at each academy—Dimensions Academy and Overman Academy—using Fall-to-Spring NWEA MAP Growth results.

CRCS will also report median mathematics CGP by grade band and by reportable student subgroup. If the median CGP for Grades 6–8, learners with IEPs, or economically disadvantaged learners falls below the 40th percentile in any reporting cycle, CRCS will document the data review, responsive instructional action, and intervention plan in its next quarterly update to the Governing Board and Maine Charter School Commission.

Describe, if applicable, plans to change the school's current model as it relates to the topics below. Include a timetable for implementation. *(Substantive changes, including, but not limited to, grade-span served, program delivery, or target population will require additional data analysis and research-based evidence after the initial charter contract is renewed.)*

Education Plan

1. Mission
    a. There are no significant changes to our mission, vision, targeted population, assessment practices, or approach to school climate and discipline that have not already been addressed in documents and conversations with the Commission.
2. Vision
    a. We continue to serve learners and families who are looking for a proficiency-based system in which grade level does not define a child's curriculum or success. We remain committed to meeting learners where they are socially, emotionally, and academically.
3. Identification of targeted student population(s) and the community the school hopes to serve.
    a. CRCS serves a diverse population that includes learners with disabilities, learners from economically disadvantaged households, learners experiencing homelessness or family transitions, learners entering from homeschooling, and learners whose needs or interests have not been fully met in a traditional grade-level setting. The school seeks to

serve these learners alongside peers from varied backgrounds while maintaining high expectations and equitable access to rigorous instruction, experiential learning, community partnerships, outdoor education, career-connected opportunities, and pathways to college and employment.

4. Academic Program
    a. No changes to the academic program - we are committed to providing explicit training and support related to Tier I intervention strategies, Universal Design for Learning, and research-based practices across special education and general education. Dimensions Academy has eight classrooms, four of which primarily serve learners in Grades 3–8. The staff working in those four classrooms have a combined 16 years of teaching experience. Continuing to provide professional development is critical, given the high percentage of learners with IEPs and 504 Plans.
5. Special Student Populations
    a. CRCS continues to serve a slightly higher proportion of learners receiving special education services compared with regional and state averages. As a result, we have hired additional case managers and special education staff, allowing qualified staff to spend more time supporting learners academically.
    b. Our special student populations are shifting toward a higher percentage of learners identified as needing special education services. Of the 157 learners currently enrolled at Dimensions Academy in Grades K–8, 104 are in Grades 3–8. Of those 104 learners, 47 receive special education services, meaning that 45% of learners in Grades 3–8 have an Individualized Education Program. This concentration has a significant impact on the interpretation of assessment data for the tested grade levels.
6. Assessment
    a. CRCS will continue using NWEA MAP Growth assessments in reading, mathematics, and language usage across all grade levels. These assessments provide consistent measures of learner achievement and growth and support instructional grouping, goal setting, progress monitoring, and individualized planning. NWEA results are considered alongside the Maine Through Year Assessment for learners in state-tested grades and the ACCUPLACER for high school learners preparing for graduation and postsecondary opportunities. Together, these assessments provide multiple measures of learner progress and help CRCS evaluate both individual outcomes and schoolwide academic performance.
7. School Climate and Discipline
    a. CRCS does not anticipate significant changes to its overall approach to school climate and discipline during the next charter term. The school will continue emphasizing relationships, belonging, self-regulation, restorative practices, clear expectations, and developmentally appropriate responses to learner behavior.

Organization Plan

1. School Calendar and Daily Schedule
    a. There are no significant changes to the school calendar at this time. Nevertheless, offering learners and staff the choice to participate in either a year-round or 10-month track would be beneficial for maximizing space and meeting the needs of learners and staff.
    b. CRCS now has a unified daily schedule, intentionally designed to provide consistency across our three physical locations.

        i. This schedule further aligns programming and instructional design.
        ii. It provides the flexibility to move staff between buildings to teach classes at different campuses when a need arises.
        iii. It provides an opportunity to address inequities and improve equity across the campuses.
2. Student Recruitment and Enrollment
    a. Community Regional Charter School uses a relationship-based marketing, recruitment, and enrollment strategy designed to help families understand the school's community-centered, ungraded, proficiency-based educational model and determine whether it is an appropriate fit for their learner.
    b. CRCS recruits families across a broad central Maine service area through school and community events, social media outreach, family referrals, community partnerships, and portable promotional materials used at local events. Facebook remains a primary outreach platform, supplemented by direct engagement at community events and through relationships with families, local organizations, and partner agencies.
    c. Enrollment is intentionally high-touch. Building administrators participate directly in family tours, conversations about the mission and learning model, and shadow-day experiences for prospective learners. Families are introduced to CRCS's expectations, flexible-grouping approach, community culture, and available supports before enrollment. During the 2025–26 school year, CRCS also offered several prospective learners the opportunity to spend up to a week in the school community during June before their official fall start.
    d. CRCS's transportation system supports equitable access across a large geographic catchment area. The school operates six established routes, with group stops in more than 20 communities, serving learners across more than 40 towns and six or more counties while generally maintaining maximum ride times of one hour or less. CRCS is strengthening its substitute-driver capacity through its approval as a Class B CDL training site, with a goal of developing three to five qualified substitute drivers by June 2027.
    e. We monitor enrollment, reenrollment, withdrawal patterns, family feedback, attendance, transportation reliability, and learner fit to improve recruitment and retention. CRCS recognizes that the individualized model requires clear communication, strong onboarding, and early family partnership—particularly for learners entering during the school year or transitioning from more traditional educational settings.
3. Staffing and Human Resources
    a. As an organization, we are continuing to mature in our procedures, protocols, hiring practices, and other matters related to human resources.
4. Management and Operation
    a. An area of concern is the level of staffing required to manage and operate three separate properties.
        i. Currently, four positions carry most of the responsibility and fill gaps when needed.
        ii. A single building would streamline management and operational responsibilities.
5. Parent and Community Development
    a. This is an area that we want and need to improve. New responsibilities have been added to the part-time Special Education Secretary position. These responsibilities include supporting capital fundraising and developing external relationships with local, state, and federal stakeholders.

Governance Plan

1. Governing Body

The CRCS Governing Board has worked over the past several years to formalize its policies, practices, and procedures. A stable and actively engaged Board has been critical to the effective governance and continued success of CRCS.

The Board has adopted a comprehensive Board Handbook that supports the onboarding of new members and serves as an ongoing governance resource. During the 2025–26 school year, the Board also developed a comprehensive annual calendar that communicates the rhythm of the organization and establishes a clear schedule for its governance responsibilities. Together, these resources enable the Board to work more proactively and strategically.

The following Board and committee goals were established for the 2025–26 school year. Progress toward these goals was monitored throughout the year and evaluated as part of the Board's annual review process.

Board Goals

1. Recruit two new board members, with particular consideration given to candidates with knowledge or experience in public education policy, proficiency-based education, business, or fundraising

   Potential recruitment sources included the Maine Municipal Association, local chambers of commerce, the Maine Education Association, retired teacher and university faculty associations, Educate Maine, AARP, current CRCS families, alumni, and parents of alumni.

2. Provide the governance, oversight, and support necessary to ensure that CRCS continued making progress toward renewal of its charter contract in 2026.

Academic Excellence Committee Goals

1. Monitor and review enrollment information, including reenrollment and persistence rates, learner demographics, and broader enrollment trends.
2. Monitor and review chronic absenteeism data and recommend strategies to improve learner attendance
3. Review academic performance data, including assessment results, regularly with the leadership team.

Finance and Facilities Committee Goals

1. Review and update the Fiscal Policies and Procedures document regularly.
2. Advance long-range facilities planning to support CRCS's educational, operational, and financial sustainability.

Governance Committee Goals

1. Review policies scheduled for review in 2023, 2024, and 2025 that had not yet been completed.

2. Review policies scheduled for 2026 within the established timeline.
3. Update and maintain the Policy Review Schedule.
4. Complete the Executive Director's annual evaluation within the timeline and process established by Board policy.

2. Governing Board Composition

The Governing Board is made up of 5 community members that come from a variety of diverse backgrounds including education, finance and technology. The Board has also made a commitment to recruiting new board members to continue to build on its diversity.

Business and Financial Services

1. Budget
    a. We currently do not foresee any major changes in our budget makeup going forward. As noted in our 3-year budget projections, we anticipate adding one or two staff positions in the next two years as our learner population grows slightly to reach maximum capacity of our current facilities.
    b. Staff salaries and benefits, especially keeping pace with rising health insurance costs, will be the most significant budgetary considerations.
2. Financial Management
    a. CRCS is transitioning to a new business manager during FY27. Throughout this process, the school will continue operating under established financial policies and internal controls. Regular financial reports, annual budgets, and financial plans are presented to and reviewed by the Finance Committee, which reports to the full Board. Grants are managed according to applicable terms and conditions, and accounts are tracked using the MDOE financial accounting system.
3. Facilities
    a. Our current facilities and multiple locations significantly affect the quality and equitable delivery of programming, enrollment, staff recruitment and retention, chronic absenteeism, and the budget. Some families and prospective employees view Cornville as too far to travel, creating a barrier to enrollment and staff recruitment.
4. Transportation
    a. No foreseeable changes to transportation. If we were to consolidate into a single building and our population increases, then we may look at taking transportation in house.
5. Insurance
    a. No foreseeable changes to health insurance are anticipated. CRCS is currently obtaining a quote from the Maine School Board Association for property, liability, automobile, and related coverage.
6. Food Service
    a. CRCS began operating its food service program in January 2015, preparing breakfast in-house while contracting with Good-Will Hinckley—and later The Maine Meal—to provide lunches. In August 2026, CRCS transitioned to preparing both breakfast and lunch in-house from scratch cooking. Because the new program will have been operating for only two full weeks when this application is submitted on September 4, 2026, it is too early to evaluate its long-term financial and operational performance. Nevertheless,

early implementation will provide initial information about meal participation, food costs, staffing needs, and learner response.

b. Dimensions Academy's original commercial kitchen was constructed in 1989 to serve approximately 120 students when the building operated as Cornville Elementary School. To create the capacity needed to serve CRCS learners across all three campuses, the school converted an unused oil-tank room and an adjacent cold-storage area—previously used to store playground equipment—into approximately 450 square feet of additional food-preparation space and an 800-cubic-foot walk-in refrigerator.
c. The project included demolition and construction of the new spaces, installation of the walk-in refrigerator, replacement of the existing flooring with an epoxy surface, new ceilings, and related building improvements. These construction costs totaled approximately $25,000, excluding the required electrical upgrades. This investment substantially increased CRCS's capacity to store ingredients safely, prepare meals efficiently, and operate a centralized food service program.
d. CRCS's goal is to provide nutritious, largely from-scratch meals to learners in PreK–12. Under the National School Lunch Program's Offer Versus Serve model, CRCS offers all five required lunch components: fruit, vegetable, grain, milk, and meat/meat alternate. Learners must select at least three components, including at least one-half cup of fruit, vegetables, or a combination of the two. This approach preserves learner choice and can reduce food waste because learners are not required to take every component offered. CRCS also plans to provide a salad and sandwich bar alongside the daily hot entrée. Offering multiple nutritious options is expected to increase learner participation, improve meal satisfaction, reduce waste, and strengthen program revenue.
e. As the program becomes established, CRCS may also explore family meal kits modeled after commercial meal-kit services. Any such initiative would be evaluated for financial feasibility, staffing capacity, food-safety requirements, and compliance with applicable school nutrition regulations before implementation.
f. The kits could create a meaningful connection between school, home, and CRCS's customized-learning model. For example, families could receive recipes paired with individualized learning activities involving measurement, proportional reasoning, reading, or ingredient comparisons. Activities could be adjusted to reflect different learners' academic needs rather than relying upon a single generic activity for every family. Technology could help generate and organize these customized learning extensions while limiting the additional workload placed on staff.
g. If feasible, the meal-kit initiative could reinforce academic skills through purposeful spiral review, strengthen family engagement, support food security, and demonstrate how CRCS connects learning to authentic experiences beyond the school day. It could also serve as another distinctive example of CRCS's community-centered and uncompromisingly learner-focused mission.

Education Service Providers (as applicable)

CRCS has never had an Educational Service Provider or major underwriter/donor. We don't foresee this changing in the future.

Addressing Special Issues

This section provides the opportunity to address special issues that the school foresees may have a dramatic impact on the school's educational programs, governance, facilities, services, or budget and to address concerns raised in the Maine Charter School Commission's Performance Report for Renewal.

PreK Enrollment

Over the past several years, PreK enrollment has declined due to several factors affecting our local community and families' educational choices. The decline in the local population has resulted in a smaller number of age-eligible children in the area. In addition, some families are seeking alternative programming, including Head Start programs that may better meet their family's needs. Families also consider scheduling and accessibility when selecting programming, including the availability of full-day programming on Fridays and transportation options, as our transportation is not door-to-door.

Additionally, the opening and continued growth of Hight's Learning Center, which opened the fall of 2025, in Skowhegan has increased the availability of early childhood programming for families. Hight's Learning Center offers services for children from birth through kindergarten age, creating another local option for families seeking early learning and care. These combined factors have contributed to increased competition for enrollment and a decline in the number of families choosing our PreK program.

Consolidation and Sustainability

Despite receiving substantially less revenue than neighboring school districts, CRCS has consistently adopted balanced budgets and maintained financial stability. The school has accomplished this through careful stewardship of its resources, including securing comparable employee health insurance at approximately one-half to two-thirds of the cost experienced by similarly sized school districts, in part because CRCS does not provide spousal coverage.

Looking ahead, the Governing Board recognizes that CRCS's long-term sustainability depends on addressing three interconnected challenges:

Academic and Programmatic Sustainability

Operating three buildings located up to 12 miles apart makes it difficult to implement CRCS's educational model consistently across the organization. Key components—including Learning Communities, Learning Coaches, seminars, flexible grouping, and other elements of CRCS's proficiency-based model—have not always been implemented with the same consistency or cohesion across all three campuses.

The campuses also offer substantially different learning environments. For example, Overman Academy lacks meaningful green and outdoor space, while Creative Children's Academy has more limited outdoor space than Dimensions Academy. These differences affect the academic, social-emotional, and community-centered experiences available to learners.

Financial and Facilities Sustainability

CRCS's three properties require ongoing maintenance and capital investment, while some buildings continue to present space limitations. Maintaining and improving three separate facilities reduces the funding available for educational programming, staffing, learner services, and other organizational priorities. Even with CRCS's history of careful financial management, the school's current revenue structure limits its ability to make substantial investments in all three properties or add the square footage needed to address existing facility concerns.

Leadership and Operational Sustainability

Several leadership positions currently encompass multiple operational responsibilities and depend upon individuals contributing time and capacity beyond what could reasonably be expected over the long term. The current budget does not provide sufficient capacity to divide all of these responsibilities among separate positions.

The Governing Board is aware of this concern and supports continued efforts to strengthen leadership capacity, increase consistency across campuses, and reduce the organization's dependence on particular individuals. An essential succession-planning question is whether CRCS could maintain the same depth of operational and instructional leadership if the Executive Director or another key leader were to leave.

At present, the Executive Director's responsibilities extend beyond organizational leadership to include significant oversight of budgeting and grants, facilities, transportation, food service, enrollment, technology, strategic alignment, and portions of facilities construction and maintenance. This breadth of responsibility has helped CRCS operate efficiently, but it should not be treated as a permanent organizational structure or as a model that could automatically be replicated through a single replacement position.

Consolidation as a Long-Term Strategy

CRCS believes that consolidation into a single campus represents the most viable long-term strategy for addressing these interconnected challenges. A unified campus would improve the consistency of the educational model, provide learners with more equitable access to programming and facilities, reduce duplication of operational costs, strengthen staff collaboration, and make leadership responsibilities more manageable and sustainable.

As part of its long-term planning, CRCS and its Governing Board will continue evaluating two central questions:

1. If CRCS continues operating three separate properties, can its educational model be implemented consistently and sustainably across all campuses?
2. Does CRCS have the financial capacity to maintain and invest adequately in three properties while also addressing space limitations and protecting resources for staffing, programming, and learner services?

CRCS is not asking the Maine Charter School Commission to approve a consolidation plan as part of this renewal application. Any future proposal would require additional analysis, financial planning, Governing Board action, and the appropriate approval process. However, a renewal decision is necessary before CRCS can responsibly make the long-term commitments required to pursue consolidation.

Renewal would provide CRCS and its Governing Board with the stability needed to evaluate and, if feasible, advance a unified-campus strategy that supports the school's long-term academic, financial, operational, and leadership sustainability.

Turnover

Governing Board Turnover

Please complete the Governing Board Turnover table below. List the number of board members joining and leaving the board in each school year of the current charter period.

School Year	Total Membership	Members Joining	Members Departing
SY2025-26	5	0	0
SY2024-25	5	1	1
SY2023-24	5	2	0
SY2022-23	7	3	4

Explanation of Governing Board Turnover

Governing Board members who resigned reported that increasing professional responsibilities limited the time they could devote to Board service. All departing members left in good standing and expressed their continued support for CRCS. The Governing Board is actively recruiting new members to expand its capacity and add expertise in identified areas of need, including capital fundraising and public policy.

Staffing and Staff Turnover

Please complete the Staffing and Staff Turnover table below. List the following information for each year of the current charter period: the number of administrators, teachers, and other staff (actual member and FTE) and the number of departures of administrators, teachers, and other staff during and at the end of each school year. Provide a brief explanation of administrator and teacher departures.

	SY2022-23	SY2023-24	SY2024-25	SY2025-26
Administrators				
Number and FTEs	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Departures during school year	0	0	0	0
Departures at end of school year	0.5	0	1	1
Teachers				
Number and FTEs	24.5	24.5	26.5	26.5
Departures during school year	2	6	5	2
Departures at end of school year	2	4	4	3
Other Staff				
Number and FTEs	22	23	22	24
Departures during school year	6	2	2	1
Departures at end of school year	1	5	3	8

Explanation of Staff Turnover

Staff turnover at CRCS has occurred for a variety of reasons, including employees relocating, starting or growing their families, pursuing positions closer to home, moving into other roles or academies within CRCS, and determining that their professional goals or educational approach were not the best fit with the school's mission, vision, and expectations. Some departures have also resulted from performance or conduct concerns requiring corrective action. In most cases, employees communicated their intentions to administration before leaving, allowing CRCS to develop transition plans that minimized disruption to learners.

Across CRCS, the greatest turnover has occurred among custodians and educational technicians, particularly special education educational technicians. Custodial turnover has primarily resulted from performance or conduct concerns warranting dismissal and workers' compensation-related circumstances. In response to turnover among educational technicians, CRCS has been revising and strengthening its on-site training and professional development to provide these employees with greater support and opportunities for professional growth.

Although these patterns affect the organization as a whole, each academy has experienced different circumstances. Dimensions Academy has maintained relatively stable staffing during the past five years. Most of its turnover has occurred among special education educational technicians. Classroom facilitator turnover has generally resulted from employees moving to other roles or academies within CRCS, corrective action, or a desire to work closer to home.

Overman Academy has experienced particularly strong retention among its special education educational technicians. One employee hired at Dimensions Academy in 2017 transferred to Overman in 2022, and another employee hired at Dimensions in 2018 transferred to Overman in 2019. A third employee, hired at Overman in 2020, recently moved into a secretary position at the academy. These examples demonstrate both staff stability and opportunities for employees to grow and transition into new roles within CRCS.

Creative Children's Academy experienced the highest percentage of turnover for two consecutive years, making 2023–24 and 2024–25 particularly challenging. Its small size and leadership structure contributed to this instability. With fewer than 50 PreK and kindergarten learners, the academy could not justify a full-time administrator; however, relying on an administrator located 12 miles away was not effective.

In spring 2024, CRCS transferred an employee seeking leadership growth into a Teaching Principal position at Creative Children's Academy. The Teaching Principal received support and oversight from a Building Principal located fewer than two miles away. In 2026–27 we moved her position to Building Principal after she demonstrated proficiency with supervision, evaluation, and managing the building. Combined with a stable staff beginning in 2025–26 and continuing into 2026–27, this leadership structure has made a significant difference. The academy's only turnover between the previous school year and the current school year resulted from the retirement of an educational technician.

Overall, CRCS has responded to turnover by strengthening leadership support, improving training and professional development, creating opportunities for internal advancement, and planning proactively when departures occur. Although turnover remains an area requiring continued attention—particularly among custodians and educational technicians—the increased stability at Creative Children's Academy and the long-term retention of staff at Overman Academy demonstrate the positive effects of these efforts.

Student Turnover

Please complete the Student Turnover table below. List the following information for each year of the current charter period: the number of students and the number of departures of students during and at the end of each school year. Provide a brief explanation of student departures.

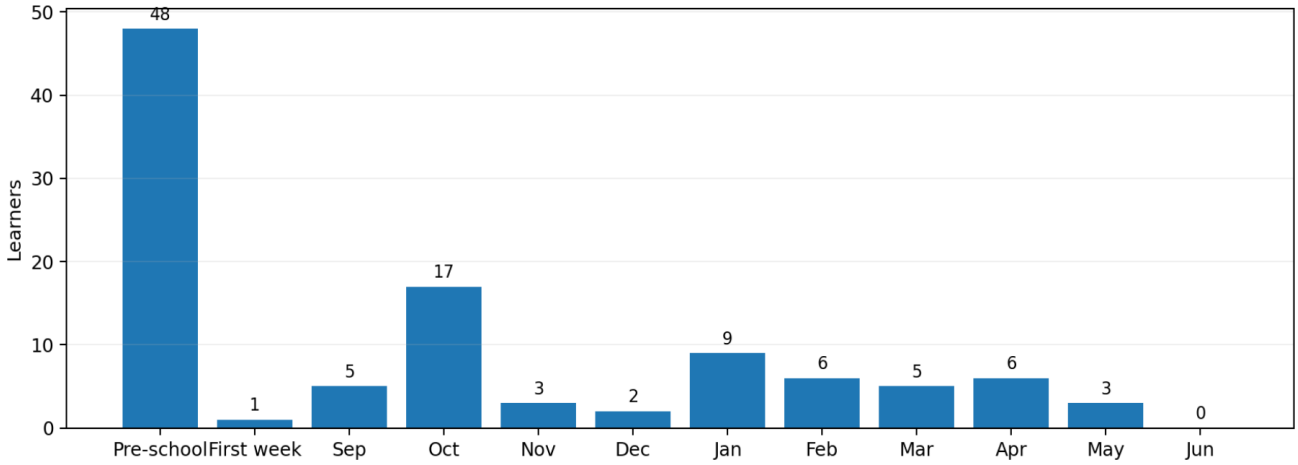
Based on October 1st Count Enrollments:

	SY2022-23	SY2023-24	SY2024-25	SY2025-26
Number of learners (October 1 count)	358	381	385	373
Departures during school year (October 2nd-last day of school)	61	74	64	51
Departures at end of school year (After the last day of school - September 30 of following year and were enrolled in the previous school year)	45	47	52	49 (as of 8/30/26)

Explanation of Student Turnover

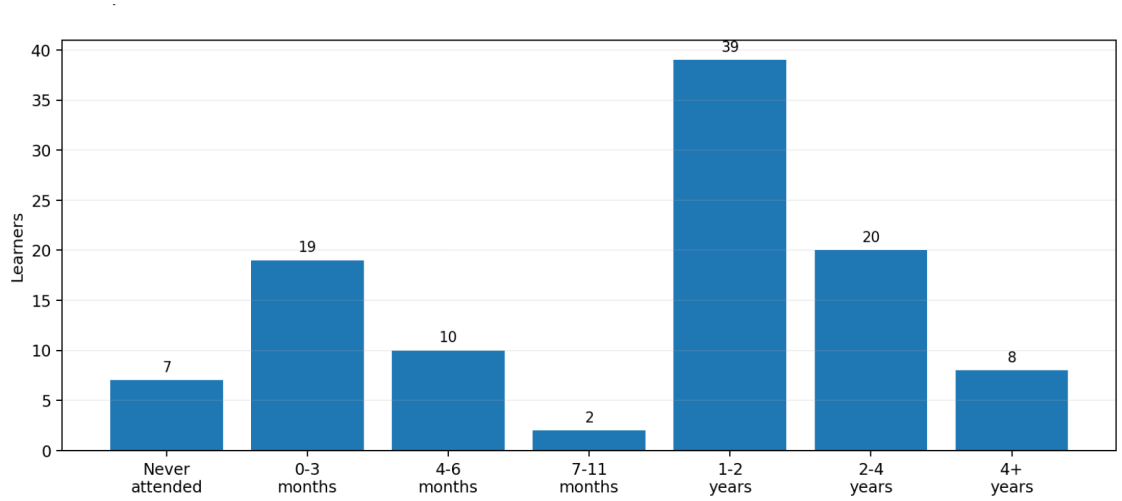
Starting in school year 2025–26, CRCS started a deeper analysis that looks at enrollment start dates and length of time before unenrolling. Additionally, CRCS was tracking unenrollments by month for the duration of the school year. The data that was analyzed looked at any learner who had enrolled for the 2025–26 school. Below you will find a couple of charts that were created to show how many unenrollments per month as well as for those who unenrolled how long they were enrolled with CRCS.

Timing of unenrollment/data by month:



Nearly half of the unenrollments from July 1st through June 17th were learners who left before the first day of school.

Enrollment duration among learners who unenrolled:



2025–26 Enrollment Analysis:

CRCS unenrollment is disproportionately concentrated around the transition into a new school year. Nearly 68% of recorded 2025–26 departures occurred before the school year began or by the end of October. This pattern suggests that enrollment changes are often associated with families reassessing school placement during the summer and early transition period, rather than a steady pattern of learners leaving throughout the academic year.

CRCS also serves families who often come to the school seeking a different educational environment. In some cases, a change in school setting does not resolve broader family, attendance, geographic, transportation, or engagement challenges. CRCS therefore continues to examine both early-transition departures and longer-term enrollment patterns rather than treating all unenrollments as a single measure of learner satisfaction.

Explanation of Learner Withdrawals and Enrollment Mobility

Learner withdrawals at CRCS generally fall into three primary categories: logistical barriers, understanding of CRCS's educational model, and changing learner or family circumstances. The influence of each factor varies based on learners' ages, developmental needs, individual interests, and available educational alternatives.

Transportation remains a significant logistical challenge. Bus routes, ride times, CRCS's extended school day, and the school's broad geographic service area can create barriers for families. Rising transportation costs and changes in where families live or work may also lead them to select a school closer to home, particularly when that school provides door-to-door transportation. CRCS has strengthened communication during tours and family onboarding so that prospective families understand transportation arrangements before enrolling. As a result, the school is seeing fewer withdrawals attributable to unexpected transportation concerns.

CRCS is also improving its marketing and enrollment communication to explain its ungraded, proficiency-based educational model more clearly. Prospective families are introduced to flexible grouping, proficiency scores, learner voice and choice, and the school's academic and attendance expectations. Some families initially support the model in theory but later determine that particular practices, such as proficiency-based grading, are not the best fit for their learner.

At Overman Academy, some high school learners enroll expecting that the model will provide an easier way to recover credits but discover that transitioning from traditional grading can be challenging and that CRCS maintains high academic expectations. These learners may subsequently return to their local school, resume homeschooling, or enter an adult education program.

CRCS enrolls many learners whose families are seeking a smaller or more individualized educational setting. This includes learners with IEPs whose families believe CRCS may be better able to meet their needs than a larger school district. In some cases, families later determine that their learner requires more comprehensive services than CRCS can provide and transfer to another school. CRCS also serves learners experiencing housing instability, family transitions, custody matters, involvement with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, or other circumstances that may result in changes in residence, transportation, or school placement.

Learner interests and social-emotional needs also influence enrollment decisions at both Dimensions Academy and Overman Academy. Some learners transfer to CRCS seeking a new environment following social, emotional, attendance, or disciplinary challenges at a previous school. When a change in learning environment does not fully resolve the underlying concern, families may choose another educational option that is closer to home or provides different services. Learners experiencing significant social anxiety may determine that CRCS's in-person attendance requirements do not meet their needs and pursue a virtual program instead.

CRCS also enrolls learners transitioning from homeschooling at both Dimensions Academy and Overman Academy. Although some make a successful transition into the CRCS community, others ultimately determine that homeschooling remains the better option for their needs. Learner interests may also lead families to pursue specialized programming at schools such as Maine Arts Academy or Maine Academy of Natural Sciences. Traditional public schools offer athletic opportunities that CRCS cannot provide directly. Although CRCS has agreements that allow learners to participate in athletics at local schools, some learners ultimately prefer to attend the same school as their teammates. These interest-based transitions are generally anticipated and planned with learners and their families.

At Creative Children's Academy, withdrawals are frequently connected to the changing needs of families with young children, including relocation, employment changes, childcare needs, and other family circumstances. Some families also choose to enroll their children in a school closer to home rather than have them transition from Creative Children's Academy to Dimensions Academy in Cornville.

Overall, learner withdrawals and enrollment mobility at CRCS reflect a combination of family mobility, transportation limitations, specialized program interests, service needs, and fit with the school's educational model. CRCS continues to improve recruitment, tours, enrollment communication, and family onboarding so that learners and families clearly understand the school's programming, expectations, transportation structure, and available supports before making an enrollment decision.

Financial Plan

As part of your renewal Application, please embed a copy of your school's approved three-year financial plan directly into this document. This plan should reflect your school's anticipated revenues and expenditures for the upcoming charter term and demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of your school going forward.

To embed the plan, insert it as a copy within the designated section below (rather than linking to an external file), so that it remains part of your complete Application. Please ensure the plan you include is the version formally approved by your school's board.

Community Regional Charter School Three Year Budget Summary Approved June 10, 2026			
	FY27	**FY28**	**FY29**
Revenue			
State Subsidy	5,080,452.75	5,583,594.64	5,924,502.56
State Funding for Economically Disadvantaged	35,100.00		
Special Revenue	757,685.09	789,189.64	820,393.98
Miscellaneous Revenue	43,000.00	44,290.00	45,618.70
Fundraising Income	4,500.00	4,635.00	4,774.05
Student Activity Accounts	1,000.00	1,030.00	1,060.90
Total Revenue	**5,921,737.84**	**6,422,739.28**	**6,796,350.19**
Expenditures			
Regular Instructional Services	2,153,252.38	2,418,370.33	2,619,554.08
Special Education Services	930,077.06	973,142.04	1,046,529.91
Supplemental Programs & Services	195,180.64	203,940.24	211,690.35
Facilities	596,132.35	617,743.65	640,082.93
Transportation	411,240.00	438,128.00	502,626.26
Food service	281,498.69	291,455.58	306,862.37
School Administration & Support	302,282.30	315,967.67	329,734.77
Central Administration & School Board	703,280.88	737,188.48	765,628.64
Debt Service	348,793.54	310,116.52	298,311.48
Total Expenditures	**5,921,737.84**	**6,306,052.52**	**6,721,020.80**
Net Surplus/Deficit	0.00	116,686.77	75,329.39
Debt Service included in Budget	348,793.54	310,116.52	298,311.48
Net Before Debt Service Payments	348,793.54	426,803.29	373,640.87
Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR)	1.00	1.38	1.25

Carryover	0.00	116,686.77	75,329.39
Estimated Cash at 6/30 prior year	683,856.91	683,856.91	800,543.68
Calculated Daily Expenses	16,223.94	17,276.86	18,413.76
Year end Cash on Hand	683,856.91	800,543.68	875,873.07
Days Cash on Hand (DCOH)	42.15	46.34	47.57
Percent of Budget by Category	**FY27**	**FY28**	**FY29**
Expenditures			
Regular Instructional Services	36.36%	38.35%	38.98%
Special Education Services	15.71%	15.43%	15.57%
Supplemental Programs & Services	3.30%	3.23%	3.15%
Facilities	10.07%	9.80%	9.52%
Transportation	6.94%	6.95%	7.48%
Food service	4.75%	4.62%	4.57%
School Administration & Support	5.10%	5.01%	4.91%
Central Administration & School Board	11.88%	11.69%	11.39%
Debt Service	5.89%	4.92%	4.44%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Note: More detailed budgetary information is available upon request.

Statement of Financial Assurance: Current Liabilities

To: The Maine Charter School Commission

From: The Governing Board of Community Regional Charter School

Date: August 31, 2026

Subject: Assurance of Financial Stability and Compliance with Current Liabilities

The Governing Board of Community Regional Charter School hereby provides formal assurance to the Maine Charter School Commission that the school is meeting its ongoing financial obligations and is fully current with all known liabilities.

Specifically, we verify the following financial controls and statuses are in place:

- **Payroll and Taxes:** All payroll obligations, federal and state payroll taxes, unemployment insurances, and related employee withholding liabilities are paid in full and current.
- **Debt Service:** The school is current on all debt service obligations, lines of credit, or financial leases, and holds no delinquent long-term liabilities.
- **Vendor Obligations:** Accounts payable and operating vendor invoices are processed in accordance with approved budgetary controls and standard commercial terms.
- **Cash-on-Hand Sufficiency:** The school maintains an adequate unrestricted cash balance to comfortably fund ongoing operational expenditures and cover near-term debts as they become due.

Supporting Evidence & Audit Compliance

In accordance with **Maine Revised Statutes Title 20-A, §2412-A.** this school undergoes an annual external financial audit conducted by a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA). The final audit report, which includes a comprehensive reconciliation of financial statements and proper budgetary controls, is submitted transparently to both the Maine Department of Education and the Commission.

We certify that, to the best of our knowledge, there are no outstanding notices of default, liens, or material financial disputes that threaten the fiscal sustainability of the institution.

Certified By:

Theresa L. Overall

Theresa Overall

Stephanie Saltzman

Board Chair/ Treasurer, Community Regional Charter School

MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Charter Renewal Site Visit Report

Community Regional Charter School

Cornville and Skowhegan, Maine

Renewal Site Visit Conducted: September 10, 2026

Report Date: September 15, 2026

Public Hearing: September 24, 2026

Prepared by the Maine Charter School Commission

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

www.mainecharterschoolcommission.org

School Profile

REPORT DATE	September 15, 2026
SCHOOL NAME	Community Regional Charter School (CRCS)
ADDRESS	Dimensions Academy (1192 W Ridge Road, Cornville); Overman Academy (78 Water Street, Skowhegan); Creative Children's Academy (48 South Factory Street, Skowhegan)
GRADES SERVED	Pre-K through 12
ENROLLMENT	Approximately 330 students (as reported at the time of the visit)
YEAR OPENED	2012
CAMPUSES	Three buildings: Dimensions (Cornville), Overman (Skowhegan), and the Creative Children's Academy (Skowhegan)
SITE VISIT DATE	September 10, 2026
REVIEW TEAM	Lana Ewing (MCSC); Amy Allen (MCSC); David Hartman (Venn Education)

Site Visit Purpose

Chapter 3 of the Commission's rules provides that once an application for renewal is filed with the Commission in compliance with the rule, the Commission shall appoint a team to review the application and conduct a site visit. This report documents that visit and is distributed to Commission members in advance of the public hearing on the school's renewal application.

The primary purpose of site visits is to inform authorizer decisions — both imminent, such as assessing a school's readiness to open, and longitudinal, when a visit is undertaken mid-term as part of routine monitoring. In a renewal year, the visit is conducted at the beginning of the year for the express purpose of gathering evidence of the school's fitness to be renewed.

The purpose of the visit is to gauge the overall progress a school is making toward the mission and goals outlined in its charter. In most cases the authorizer already possesses quantitative data about that progress — academic performance, attendance rates, graduation rates, and other annual outcomes — so a site visit helps explain the context behind that data and explores the school's fidelity to its approved program. Site visits also provide Commission staff the opportunity to review and analyze documentation that may be better understood onsite, such as factors impacting attendance or rates of academic growth across subgroups.

Site visits are a mechanism for collecting additional evidence regarding a school's performance against the expectations memorialized in its contract, and they contribute to the body of data the Commission uses to make a renewal recommendation. This report is one input among several; it does not by itself constitute the Commission's renewal decision, which is made by a vote of the Commission.

Site Visit Process

The Commission's renewal site visits are based on both the criteria set forth in the school's performance framework and the school's alignment with its mission. The categories in the performance framework are student achievement, school climate and family engagement, organizational sustainability, financial management and viability, faithfulness to the charter and the law, and the school's customized criteria. The findings in this report are organized to follow those categories.

Team members used the Commission's Monitoring Site Visit Manual (adopted April 2019, updated April 2023) to plan for and conduct the visit. Prior to the visit, the team met to review the purpose of the visit, to review the school's historical and current strengths and areas for growth, and to develop school-specific focus group and interview questions to supplement the Commission's standard question sets. Because CRCS operates across three buildings, the team gathered evidence at more than one campus and has noted throughout this report where practice differs between them.

Review Team

- Lana Ewing — Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Amy Allen — Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- David Hartman — External Reviewer, Venn Education

Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus group interviews were held with groups at the school. Each group was asked a standard set of questions drawn from the Site Visit Manual, as well as school-specific questions created for this visit. Focus group interviews held by the team:

- Administration / Leadership Team: seven participants, including the building principals, special education leadership, and facilitator representation across campuses
- Governing Board: two participants, the Board Chair and a member of the Finance Committee
- Teachers and Staff (facilitators): seven participants representing science, ELA, social studies, health and physical education, design and technology, Title I intervention, and the Creative Children's Academy, with tenure at the school ranging from first year to six years
- Students: ten students in grades 4 through 12, with enrollment at the school ranging from two years to thirteen years
- Families: five families representing students across all three buildings, including families of students with IEPs and 504 plans

At each session the Site Visit Team provided assurance that the information discussed in focus groups is not for personnel evaluation purposes, will not be reported in potentially identifying ways, and is gathered to help the team better understand systems, processes, and trends at the school. Consistent with that assurance, individual students, families, and facilitators are not identified in this report.

Classroom Observations

Classroom and school observations were conducted for the purpose of collecting evidence and observing school-wide trends, not to evaluate individual teaching or teachers. The team selected the classrooms it

visited in order to see a variety of subjects, grade levels, and buildings. Ten classrooms were observed across two campuses:

- Overman — World Cultures; Algebra; Law / Social Studies; Food Science and Culinary Arts; Forensic Science (integrated algebra and chemistry); English / Poetry
- Dimensions — upper elementary literature study; early childhood phonics and movement; early literacy centers; sentence construction

Renewal Timeline

The following dates govern the balance of the renewal process:

- September 10, 2026 — Renewal site visit conducted at the school
- September 24, 2026 — Public hearing on the renewal application
- October 13, 2026 — Renewal recommendation presented to the Commission for a vote

The School's Mission

Community Regional Charter School serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 across three buildings in central Maine. The school's defining feature is an ungraded, individualized model: students are placed and grouped by learning target and readiness rather than by age or grade level, and each student's pathway through credits and seminars is built around that student's data, interests, and post-secondary goals.

The school's approved mission is as follows:

> *We are Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused. Community Regional Charter School creates a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment where everyone is accepted and celebrated. The CRCS provides a customized learning environment designed to allow every child to thrive socially, emotionally and academically through the integration of STEAM projects and community connections aimed at unlocking a passion for life-long learning.*

The phrase staff returned to most often, and which the team heard in every adult focus group, was "uncompromisingly learner-focused" — language drawn directly from the mission itself. Leadership described that clause operationally: "We meet learners where they are and put them where they need to be," with every credit a student earns unique to that student. Facilitators described gathering assessment data in the first weeks of school and using it to place students, offering the example of a seventh grader who is well developed socially and emotionally but not yet in ELA, and who is therefore served differently in each. Families chose the school precisely because students are grouped by ability rather than assigned by grade. Students articulated the model clearly, telling the team that what they learn is based on their learning level rather than their grade, and naming the school motto — safe, respectful, and responsible — without prompting.

The mission's other clauses were also visible during the visit. The commitment to a customized environment in which every child thrives socially, emotionally, and academically was the reason most families gave for enrolling, and several described children who had disengaged elsewhere reengaging

here; leadership and facilitators consistently framed social-emotional readiness as a placement factor alongside academic readiness. STEAM integration appeared in course design — forensic science combining algebra and chemistry, physics of outer space, a geometry-based island-building unit, 3D printing and laser engraving, the science of cooking. Community connections appeared in maple sugaring, community outreach coursework, and community service opportunities built into electives. The community-centered clause was most evident in the school's relationship with families, which is discussed in Section C.

That consistency is a significant finding in itself. Mission comprehension across stakeholder groups was strong, and every group could describe differentiation as the mechanism by which the mission is delivered. As detailed in the findings below, the team's central question concerns the distance between that shared understanding and what was visible in daily classroom practice.

> *"Outliers on either side are getting what they need." — Governing Board member*

Site Visit Findings

Findings are organized by the categories of the Commission's performance framework. Each section summarizes the evidence gathered during the visit and identifies both strengths and opportunities for continued growth. Where this report cites quantitative results, those results are drawn from the school's self-reported data and performance framework submissions and should be read alongside the Commission's annual performance framework outcomes.

A. Mission Alignment

The team found that the school's mission is well understood and genuinely believed across every stakeholder group, and that the structural elements of the model — ungraded placement, seminar catalogs, individualized credit pathways — are in place and operating. The team also found meaningful variation between what stakeholders described and what was observed in classrooms, and meaningful variation between the two campuses in how the model is implemented.

Evidence gathered

- Leadership described the ungraded model in operational detail: seminar rosters drive backward planning by the facilitator, math offers two pathways geared to student level, and credit planning becomes more deliberate in grades 11 and 12 as students orient toward post-secondary goals.
- Facilitators described building curriculum from student data rather than from a fixed scope and sequence, deliberately leaving structure loose until rosters and pre-assessment results are in hand. One facilitator described the balance as "a fine line between being prepared and waiting."
- Students described choosing seminars from options facilitators offer, earning targets at their own level, and a culture of experiential learning — nature walks, ice fishing, 3D printing a model solar system, cooking, field trips.
- Families chose the school specifically for the ungraded model, and several described children who had disengaged elsewhere reengaging here. Multiple families described the school as a partnership that retains accountability.

- Course offerings reflect the mission's ambition — forensic science combining algebra and chemistry, physics of outer space, Wabanaki studies, maple sugaring, an island-building unit integrating geometry.
- The board described using the mission as a governance filter, citing a summer AI policy that was revised to add developmentally appropriate criteria and alignment with the school's philosophy before adoption.

Strengths

- Mission comprehension is consistent and deep across leadership, facilitators, students, families, and the board — a level of alignment the team does not always find.
- The school has built real structural infrastructure for the model, including the seminar catalog, target-based placement, and Empower as a common platform housing curriculum, standards, and evaluation.
- Facilitators are given genuine latitude to design courses and take instructional risks, and they describe that latitude as a primary reason they stay.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Implementation of the model is uneven between buildings. The "intentional intermission" structure, which facilitators described as working well at Dimensions, was introduced at Overman this year and was described by staff there as a poor fit for older students — an hour is too long where there is insufficient space for students to go, and the structure was implemented without adequate time to work through it.
- The role of learning coaches was identified by leadership itself as an area where documentation and evidence of contact with students is missing. The team encourages the school to define and document this role.
- Differentiation was described by every stakeholder group but was not consistently visible in the classrooms observed. This is addressed in detail in the Classroom Observation Summary below.

B. Student Achievement

The school has assembled a substantial set of assessment tools and uses them actively, particularly at Dimensions. Leadership speaks about data fluently and has begun using AI tools to translate assessment results into instructional planning. The team's concern is not with the school's access to data or interest in it, but with the rate of academic growth the data must eventually demonstrate, and with mathematics performance in particular.

Assessment and data systems

- NWEA is the school's primary growth measure; leadership uses Rasch unIT (RIT) bands as a starting point and described using AI to generate teaching points calibrated to specific students' RIT bands.
- Through-year assessment data are used alongside NWEA. iReady was adopted for ELA in the past year and all learners are filtered through it to build instructional groups; IXL is used for math placement and diagnostics; Fountas and Pinnell is used for new learners; Overman uses Pathway2Careers (P2C) for math and Achieve the Core for standards mapping.

- Empower houses curriculum, Common Core and Maine Learning Results alignment, and student target progress. Facilitators, students and families named Empower as a tool that provides clarity — a notably consistent endorsement.
- Staff meetings are used to review data, and facilitators described preliminary review of prior-year NWEA results to shape the year's offerings and target focus.
- Leadership described flexibly moving students between seminars based on academic need, and reviewing performance by gender and subgroup.

Supports for students with disabilities and students at risk

- Special education enrollment is high and rising. Leadership reported school-wide identification in the 20–35% range depending on measure and building, with approximately 46% of students in the testing grades at Dimensions identified. These figures exclude students on 504 plans. Leadership reported higher identification rates in pre-K and kindergarten.
- The special education team includes three case managers, with a fourth pursuing certification, supported by educational technicians. Leadership described constant communication between the special education team and facilitators.
- Facilitators described Universal Design for Learning as the primary framework, with students recording learning in notebooks and instruction scaffolded toward what students can do.
- Leadership noted that because the school cannot ask about IEP status at application, staffing must be adjusted in the first six to eight weeks of each year, which they described as a heavy period.
- Educational technician and custodial positions carry the highest turnover, and leadership identified difficulty recruiting experienced staff into support roles as a persistent constraint. The school's stated strategy is to grow its own educational technicians.
- Leadership noted a tendency for accommodations designed for individual students to be applied to entire classes — sentence stems and word banks were the examples given.

Strengths

- A genuine data culture at the leadership level, with multiple triangulating measures and active use rather than compliance filing.
- Empower as a shared platform providing clarity to facilitators, students, and evaluators alike.
- Willingness to innovate in the use of assessment data, including early adoption of AI-assisted instructional planning.
- Students at both ends of the achievement distribution are demonstrably served by the model, including a documented case of a middle school student auditing calculus.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Mathematics performance was identified by the team as a specific gap in the academic program and warrants a targeted improvement plan with measurable annual targets.
- Accelerating growth is the central academic challenge. The model is ambitious and stakeholders are invested in it; the team's expectation is that the performance framework indicators show demonstrable annual progression across the next term.

- Facilitator experience is a limiting factor. Leadership reported average teaching experience of under three years, class sizes of approximately 23 at both Dimensions and Overman, and candidly acknowledged that coaching new facilitators to teach well in this model is difficult. The model requires more instructional expertise than a conventional one, and the staffing profile does not yet match that requirement.
- Professional development (PD) access is uneven. Facilitators at Dimensions described being sent to conferences geared to their practice; Overman staff reported fewer PD opportunities and described relying on peer support in the absence of a library or comparable resources.
- The school has no curriculum coordinator; curriculum support is provided by a building principal in addition to her other duties. Given that facilitators build curriculum from scratch, the team views this as a structural gap.

C. School Climate and Family Engagement

Family engagement is a clear strength. Families described exceptional communication, genuine partnership, and responsiveness they had not experienced at previous schools. Student responses on climate were more mixed than those of any other stakeholder group in either renewal visit this cycle, and the team reports them as given.

Evidence gathered — families

- Families consistently described the school as the reason their children reengaged with education, citing individualized learning, accommodation on assessments, social-emotional support, and the absence of homework paired with clear visibility into what students are learning.
- Communication was described as frequent and multi-channeled: weekly or biweekly classroom updates, trimester progress reports, individualized student progress reports, NWEA results with progress notes, plus phone calls, texts, emails, and surveys.
- Families reported being consulted on operational decisions affecting them, including bus stops, schedule changes, and food options, and said they are welcome in classrooms.
- Families described proactive, campus-specific communication during safety events, including a shelter-in-place and a lockdown prompted by an incident in the surrounding community, and said the outreach was timely and clear.
- Families described the school as building trust and rapport such that students who had previously been afraid to ask for help now do so, and said they know their children will be taken seriously by an adult in the building.
- Transportation distance was raised as a burden by families traveling substantial distances to attend.

Evidence gathered — students

- Students named friends, freedom, choice of classes, protected work time, electives, and access to resources as the best parts of the school. Several said the school does not lack technology or opportunity.
- On bullying, student responses diverged. Some said facilitators address it when they are aware of it, take students aside, and talk it through. Others said it happens frequently, that adults do not always respond, and that lower-level incidents such as language are taken less seriously than physical ones.

Students described a case-by-case approach rather than automatic consequences, which some framed positively as common sense.

- On safety, most students reported feeling safe at school. Some reported discomfort around particular peers.
- Mixed-age grouping produced the most consistent student discomfort. Several students described being in classes with students substantially younger, said it feels odd, and said they want to be with peers their own age. Students also articulated the rationale accurately and noted that older students bring more rigor to shared activities.
- Students described recess supervision positively, noting that facilitators wear identifying vests and circulate to head off conflict, and that adults help students learn to resolve disagreements.
- Students asked for more challenge, more structure, more consistent technology access, and more electives.

Strengths

- Family trust and communication are exceptional and were corroborated by every family in the group.
- Safety communication to families is prompt, campus-specific, and appreciated.
- Adults are intentional about coaching students through conflict, and the school has an explicit, shared approach to unstructured time.

Opportunities for continued growth

- The gap between adult and student accounts of bullying response warrants attention. The team does not conclude that the school is unresponsive, but student perception is itself a climate finding and should be examined through survey data and follow-up.
- Drill practice should be confirmed and made consistent across all three buildings.
- Mixed-age grouping is central to the model, but the team encourages the school to address student experience of it directly, particularly for high school students, and to be explicit with students about the reasoning.
- Student requests for greater challenge were frequent enough to constitute a pattern and align with the team's classroom observations.
- Facility limitations — green space, library, a building purpose-built as a school, and room for students during unstructured time — were raised independently by students, facilitators, and families.

D. Governance and Organizational Sustainability

The board has strengthened meaningfully during this charter term. It reviews data monthly, has adopted structured goal-setting, held its first retreat, and has begun asking harder questions of school leadership. The team's concerns are about strategic direction, the consistency of the executive director evaluation, and the absence of systematic support and oversight structures for the leadership team.

Evidence gathered

- The board reviews data monthly except in July and August, rotating through measures including NWEA results and chronic absenteeism. The Academic Excellence Committee meets monthly and reports findings to the full board.
- The board identified chronic absenteeism as a concern in the prior year, discussed both categories and individual student circumstances, and reported that school leadership took action in response to board feedback.
- Board members described school leadership as forthcoming with data and described being able to see individual student improvement tracked over time.
- The board changed its meeting practice so that committees report substantively on their work rather than presenting minutes for approval, which members described as a material improvement.
- An executive director evaluation survey was distributed to all staff at the executive director's request. That survey surfaced that staff did not consistently know who their supervisor was, and the board responded by requesting a written organizational chart.
- The board uses Board on Track for surveys, goal setting, and governance documentation, and has added its own questions. The board chair has met with peer board chairs to compare practice.
- The board held its first retreat this term, including one-on-one interviews of every board member by the chair, and plans a second retreat in January with AI orientation on the agenda.
- Board and committee SMART goals are set through Board on Track and reviewed annually. The board requested an annual calendar aligning data reviews to meeting agendas, which members described as a useful planning tool.
- Recruitment is targeted: the board surveyed members on their skills, identified gaps, and is recruiting for fundraising and public school policy experience. Turnover has been gradual rather than wholesale.

Strengths

- Monthly, substantive academic data review by a standing committee with reporting to the full board.
- Demonstrated responsiveness: the board identified a concern, requested action, and tracked the school's response.
- Candor. Board members were direct with the team about where governance practice has been inconsistent.
- Structured self-development through Board on Track, retreats, and targeted skills-based recruitment.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Strategic direction. The board's strategic planning is currently concentrated in the Finance Committee's scenarios. The team encourages the board to articulate what it wants the organization to look like in three years across academics, staffing, and facilities — not only in financial/facilities terms.
- Executive director evaluation. A policy exists but has not been consistently followed on timeline. Board members noted that the current timeline would not work if the board needed to hire a new

executive director, since that decision would need to be made by June. The board recently approved creating an Executive Committee to serve as the HR committee for the evaluation; the team encourages prompt implementation.

- Oversight of systems and support. The team found no formal support structure for the leadership team itself, and no systematic structure for instructional support or classroom management coaching. Leadership described itself as spread thin and wearing multiple hats. Support for teachers is real but informal, and several of the academic gaps the team observed could be mitigated by more systematic coaching.
- Leadership succession planning. Given the degree to which the organization depends on its current leadership, the team views succession planning as a sustainability question the board should take up in this next term.
- The team notes that board agendas and minutes should be posted online consistently.

E. Financial Management and Viability

The school's current financial position is solid and its financial oversight practice is strong. The forward-looking risk is enrollment, and the board is addressing that risk deliberately.

Evidence gathered

- An active Finance Committee reviews monthly financials and budget-to-actual reporting, and models scenarios against the budget so that the financial implications of each option are known in advance.
- The committee conducted a cost analysis of the in-house kitchen and has modeled multi-building operating costs, including the staffing implications of operating three buildings rather than two.
- The board is actively evaluating enrollment contingencies. Options under consideration include consolidating buildings. No decision has been made.
- Decisions are sequenced to real data: the October 1 certified student count, a board decision window at the end of October, and state allotment information available in February.
- Board members were explicit that these decisions involve staff jobs and family stability, and described wanting to plan early rather than react late.
- The board has identified an unused large retail space at one campus as a potential academic conversion, with preliminary remodeling estimates discussed.
- Enrollment at the time of the visit was reported at approximately 330 students.

Strengths

- Financial reporting and scenario modeling are strong and genuinely used in decision-making.
- The board is planning against enrollment risk early, with a defined decision timeline tied to certified counts rather than to speculation.
- Cost discipline is evident in the analysis applied to specific operational decisions.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Enrollment is the school's principal financial exposure and the variable on which the consolidation decision turns. Sustained attention to recruitment and retention is warranted.

- Fundraising capacity. The school has identified a need for board members with fundraising experience, and leadership specifically noted the need for someone with capital campaign expertise. The team supports that recruitment priority.
- Communication planning. Consolidation scenarios are being discussed at the board level. The team encourages the board to prepare that framing in advance of any decision for families and staff.

Classroom Observation Summary

The team observed ten classrooms across two campuses, spending approximately 10 minutes in each. Observations are reported here as school-wide trends. Consistent with the Site Visit Manual, the purpose of these observations is to collect evidence of school-wide practice, not to evaluate individual teaching or teachers, and no individual teacher is identified.

The school's model depends on classroom execution more than a conventional model does. The team wishes to be clear that it saw strong practice, in addition to practice that needs improvement, and that any criticisms below are of implementation rather than of intent.

Trends observed

Student engagement and opting out

- Across a majority of the classrooms observed, a meaningful share of students were not engaged in the thinking work of the lesson. At the high school level this typically presented as passive opting out — present, quiet, compliant, not thinking. At the elementary level disengaged students more often presented as students fully off task.
- In one mathematics lesson, instruction was direct, the teacher held the knowledge, students were quiet and attentive but visibly disengaged, and only four of eleven students indicated understanding when asked. In a social studies lesson, note-taking was optional and only two or three students took notes.
- In one upper elementary classroom, roughly half of students appeared on task, and two students the reviewer spoke with could not describe what they were working on.
- The team regards engagement as the leading indicator here: students who are not engaged are not growing, and the growth acceleration the school needs cannot come from a classroom in which opting out is available.

Differentiation in practice

- Despite differentiation being described by every stakeholder group as the core of the model, the team observed limited differentiation in most classrooms. In several, all students were completing the same worksheet or the same activity regardless of level.
- This finding suggests that the model's central promise is not yet reliably delivered at the classroom level.

Behavioral expectations and classroom management

- Expectations for student behavior were not consistent across classrooms or across campuses, and facilitators varied in how consistently they held the expectations they set.

- The team saw positive, well-judged redirection in many classrooms. It also saw instances where redirection was issued and not followed through, and one instance where an adult gave subsequent directions while talking over students rather than waiting for full attention.

Strong practice observed

- The Food Science and Culinary Arts classroom was a clear example of the model working: students engaged in genuinely different tasks at different stages, with templates provided for recipe creation and reflection, and all students purposefully occupied.
- Early literacy instruction at Dimensions showed well-organized centers with four differentiated activity groups, visible evidence of Science of Reading practice, an adult working one-to-one on letter sounds, and clear physical organization of the space.
- An early childhood phonics and movement lesson had nearly all students engaged and participating in letter motions and sounds.
- In a world cultures lesson, the facilitator conferenced individually with students during independent work, and off-task technology use was noticed and redirected promptly.
- Integrated and applied course design — forensic science, culinary arts, poetry with structured sensory prompts — reflects real creativity in curriculum construction.

Suggested instructional focus

- Build risk-positive classrooms that raise participation through turn-and-talk and small-group discussion rather than whole-class question-and-answer.
- Attach accountable tasks to passive activities; where note-taking supports the objective, require it rather than offering it.
- Use visuals, timelines, and maps to support content delivery in the humanities.
- Establish a consistent, school-wide set of behavioral expectations, and coach facilitators to hold them consistently, including waiting for full attention before giving directions.
- Ensure that tasks within a classroom vary by student readiness, so that observed practice matches the differentiation the school describes.

Conclusion

Community Regional Charter School is attempting something genuinely ambitious. An ungraded, individualized, target-based model spanning pre-kindergarten through grade 12 across three buildings asks more of its adults than a conventional school does, and the team wants to record clearly that it admires the attempt. Every stakeholder group understands the mission, believes in it, and can describe it accurately. Families described the school in terms the team rarely hears, crediting it with reengaging children who had disengaged elsewhere. Communication with families is excellent. Trust across the organization was evident in every conversation.

The governance and financial picture is also stronger than it has been. The board reviews data monthly, has structured its own development, asks harder questions than it once did, and is planning against enrollment risk early and methodically. Finances are in a solid position today, and the scenario work the

Finance Committee has done means the board will make its consolidation decision with the numbers already in hand.

The team's observation is the distance between the model as described and the model as practiced. In the classrooms observed, differentiation was largely absent, engagement was inconsistent, and behavioral expectations varied from room to room. That gap is explicable — average facilitator experience is under three years, class sizes are near 23, there is no curriculum coordinator, professional development access differs by building, and instructional coaching is informal rather than systematic — but explanation is not the same as resolution. A model this demanding requires a support system proportionate to its demands, and that system is not yet built.

A draft renewal recommendation will be provided to the school on September 28, 2026, with a 48-hour review period, and the renewal recommendation will be presented to the Commission for a vote on October 13, 2026. Nothing in this report should be construed as indicating the Commission's renewal decision, which rests with the Commission.

Respectfully submitted by the Renewal Site Visit Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

COMMUNITY REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL

Skowhegan & Cornville, Maine · Established 2012

Charter Renewal Report

Year Four Performance Review

Charter Term: School Years 2022–23 through 2025–26 (Years 1–4)

Performance outcomes on the Maine Charter School Commission Performance Framework

Prepared by

Maine Charter School Commission

June 2026

Note: Year Four (SY2025–26) outcomes are *preliminary*, reported as of Quarter 3, and subject to final year-end data. Several Year-Four figures will change as fourth-quarter results are finalized.

Mission & Vision

Mission

Community Regional Charter School (CRCS) is Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused. CRCS creates a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment where everyone is accepted and celebrated. CRCS provides a customized learning environment designed to allow every child to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically through the integration of STEAM projects and community connections aimed at unlocking a passion for life-long learning.

Vision

To create a school where learning is built around each student so that they become engaged learners with relevant and challenging work. CRCS operates as an ungraded, proficiency-based district that meets learners where they are — assessing each student individually and grouping them by what they need to learn next.

Three campuses, one school. CRCS delivers its mission across three campuses serving PreK–12: Creative Children's Academy (early childhood), Dimensions Academy (elementary/middle school), and Overman Academy (middle/high school). Where the data allow, outcomes in this report are reported separately for the campuses, in recognition of the distinct populations each serves.

Governance, Leadership & School Profile

Governing Board

Dr. Theresa Overall
Board Chair

Stephanie Saltzman
Treasurer

Jessica Dionne
Member

Michael Buja
Member

Charlie-Marie Hansen
Member

Leadership Team

Travis Works
Executive Director

Elizabeth Firnkes
Building Principal — Creative Children's & Overman Academy

Susan Muzzy
Building Principal — Dimensions Academy

Nicki Reinholt
Director of Special Education

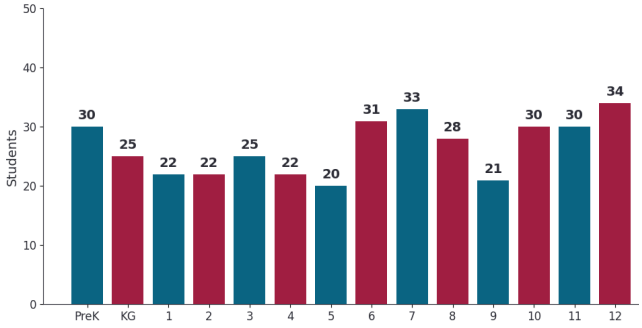
School Profile

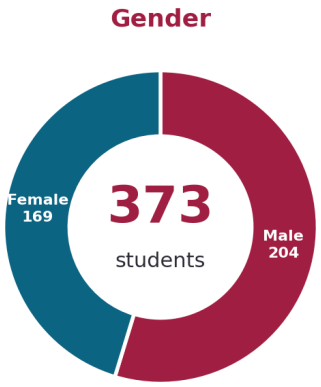
Year Opened	2012–13	**Years in Operation**	14
Location	Skowhegan & Cornville, ME	**Grades Served**	PreK–12
Campuses	Creative Children's, Dimensions, Overman	**Sending Districts**	23
Model	Ungraded, proficiency-based	**Enrollment**	373 students (SY2025–26)

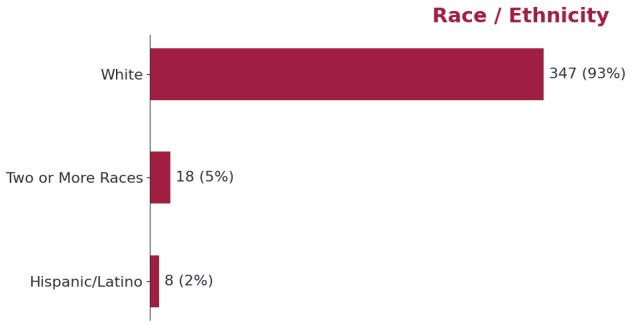
Profile reflects the most recent reported operating year. SY2025–26 enrollment of 373 students reflects a modest decline from 385 in SY2024–25.

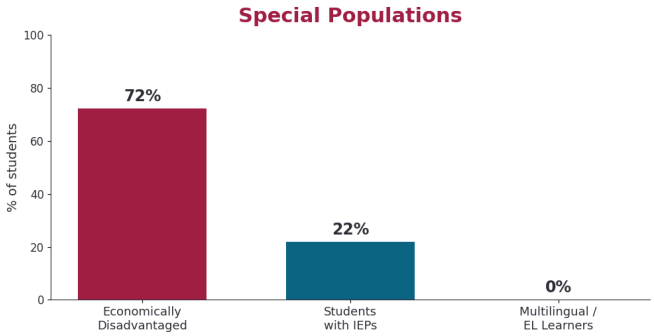
Student Demographics

CRCS serves roughly 373 students drawn from 40 cities and towns across the greater Skowhegan area. The school enrolls a markedly higher-need population than the state as a whole: more than seven in ten students are economically disadvantaged and more than one in five receive special education services. The charts below summarize the student body.









Serving high-need students. At roughly 72% economically disadvantaged (SY2025–26), CRCS enrolls more than one and a half times the statewide rate (45.8%), and its share of students with IEPs (about 22%) exceeds the state average.

Performance Over the Charter Term

This section summarizes Community Regional Charter School's performance across the four years of its current charter (SY2022–23 through SY2025–26) against the Commission's Performance Framework. Year-Four figures are preliminary. Throughout, outcomes are reported separately for the Dimensions and Overman campuses wherever the data allow, in recognition of the distinct populations each serves.

Student Achievement

State proficiency on the Maine Through-Year Assessment has been the district's most variable indicator and is its clearest area of focus. Across SY2023–24 and SY2024–25, CRCS was Not Meeting expectations in both reading and math at the district level, with results below the state average in most grades. Preliminary SY2025–26 results show a meaningful rebound in reading — third-grade reading rose from 21% to 60% at or above state expectations, and grades 6 and 7 reached 61% and 72% — while mathematics remains the top academic priority. The school reports it doubled its winter-to-spring math growth after concentrating on algebraic reasoning, and for SY2026–27 plans to

rebalance instruction across geometry and measurement and pilot iReady math supports modeled on its successful literacy approach.

Academic growth on the NWEA MAP tells a more favorable story, particularly at Dimensions Academy, which met growth expectations in reading, language, and math in SY2024–25. Overman Academy's growth has been mixed and remains a focus, though preliminary SY2025–26 results and the school's within-standard-deviation analysis (Dimensions 77% reading, Overman 62% reading) point to gains, especially among students with IEPs.

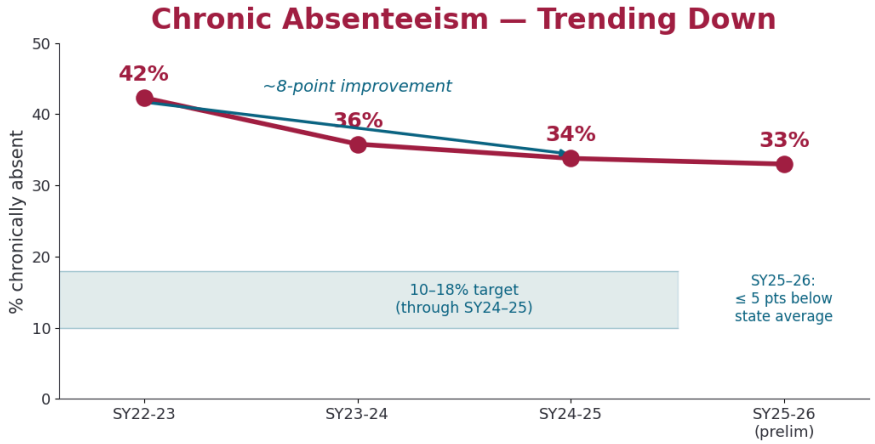
College readiness has been a durable strength. On the Accuplacer, the share of seniors meeting college-readiness benchmarks has held in the 76%–90% range every year — reading moved 82% → 86% → 76% → 90% (preliminary) and math has stayed near 76%–86%. Graduation is a consistent strength as well: the four-year rate has exceeded expectations every year of the term (92%, 94%, 97%, and a preliminary 96% — 27 of 28 students — in SY2025–26), well above the state's annual target.

Graduation & Post-Secondary Readiness

CRCS's ungraded, proficiency-based model allows highly individualized post-secondary planning, with dual-enrollment access beginning in 10th grade through Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) and Somerset Career and Technical Center (SCTC). Post-secondary activity participation has ranged from Approaching to Exceeding across the term (81% in SY2022–23, 61% in SY2023–24, 71% in SY2024–25), and the school supports families with FAFSA completion as needed.

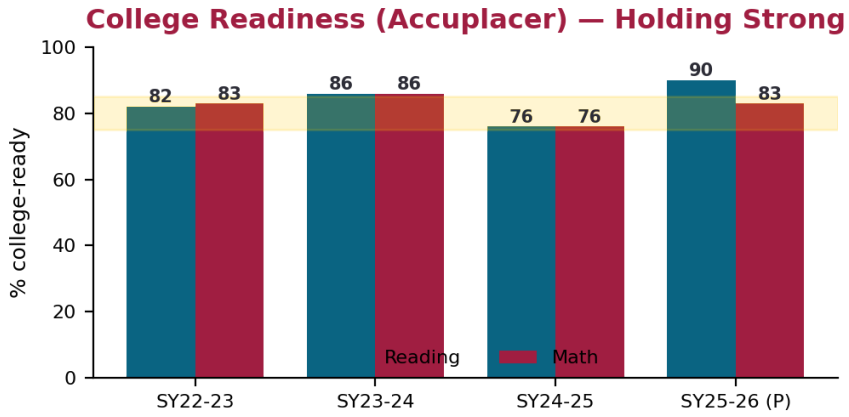
A Continuing Focus: Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism remains the district's most persistent challenge. The Commission has revised the absenteeism target to align with Maine's statewide average, recognizing that chronic absenteeism has risen across the state and that a regional benchmark is a fairer point of comparison than a fixed threshold. Against that benchmark, CRCS's rate—while still within the "does not meet expectations" range—is more consistent with the rates of the counties it draws from most, particularly Somerset (32%), than its standing against the former 10–18% target would suggest. Under either standard the district does not meet expectations, though district-wide absenteeism has fallen steadily: 42.3%, 35.8%, 33.8%, and 33% (preliminary). Dimensions Academy is the bright spot — its rate dropped into the mid-20s (24% in SY2024–25), enough to be Approaching the new target in two years of the term, with SY2025–26 (27% preliminary) not yet classifiable. Overman Academy, holding near 38–39%, drives most of the district's rate. The district attributes much of the count to transportation barriers across its wide rural catchment, where county absenteeism runs high (Somerset ≈ 32%).



Strengths: College Readiness & School Climate

College readiness has held high and steady across the term, as shown below, and remains one of the district's clearest success stories alongside graduation.



School Climate & Family Engagement

School culture and climate is a consistent, standout strength. On the annual Panorama surveys, family results have Exceeded expectations since SY2023–24, and teacher and staff results have Exceeded expectations across campuses — frequently at the 90th–99th percentile nationally compared to similar schools. Student results have been more uneven. Overman students have consistently Exceeded expectations; Dimensions' younger students (grades 3–5) lagged earlier in the term but climbed to Exceeding in SY2025–26. In SY2022–23, strong family scale results did Not Meet the standard solely because family participation fell below the 35% threshold; participation has since risen well above it (81% in SY2025–26). Family communication is a noted area for renewed focus in the coming year.

Organizational Sustainability & Governance

CRCS has consistently met the requirement for board meetings (twelve in each of the last two years) and performs strongly on reporting accuracy and timeliness (Exceeding throughout, at 91%–98%). In SY2025-26, the board Met the board training requirement, which improved sharply from 26% to 71% to 100%. The board also improved its posting of meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes and are now Meeting framework expectations.. The board has built a comprehensive Board Handbook, strengthened its standing committees, named Dr. Theresa Overall as permanent Board Chair, and is actively recruiting members with targeted skill sets.

Financial Management & Viability

CRCS maintains a strong financial position. Based on FY26 third-quarter financials, the district is low risk on nearly all framework metrics, with only unrestricted days cash on hand (48 days) in the moderate-risk range and enrollment variance as high-risk due to a slight decrease in enrollment. CRCS operates with a balanced budget and has received a clean independent audit for all years of their charter term. The most significant strategic question facing the district is facilities: CRCS operates three aging buildings and is evaluating consolidation into a single new facility — engaging a financial feasibility study and national financing partners — to better match space to enrollment and reduce long-term capital costs.

Mission, Customization & Persistence

Across the entire term, CRCS has Met expectations for Mission and Key Design Implementation. Its ungraded, proficiency-based model — with summer programming, Learning Coaches, MTSS supports, and STEAM integration across all three buildings — is implemented with fidelity. On the customized NWEA growth-within-one-standard-deviation goals, the district has Met or Exceeded expectations in reading and math across the term. Student persistence has historically been strong (86% in-year and 95% year-to-year in SY2022–23);

the school did not separately report persistence in SY2024–25, and the Commission encourages consistent reporting going forward.

Summary

CRCS enters renewal with a clear profile. Its strengths are substantial and well documented: an exceptional school climate, sustained college readiness, strong and consistent graduation rates, solid academic growth at Dimensions Academy, a distinctive ungraded proficiency-based model implemented with fidelity, and a financially stable, audit-clean operation. These are balanced against candid challenges — state proficiency (especially mathematics), chronic absenteeism, and a pressing facilities decision — each acknowledged by the school and paired with documented improvement strategies, several of which already show multi-year progress.

Performance Framework Outcomes — Four-Year Comparison

Ratings below reflect each year's reported outcome on the Commission Performance Framework. SY2022–23 proficiency was not rated (Through-Year Assessment was new and state data were delayed). SY2025–26 is preliminary (as of Q3). Financial metrics first appeared on the annual report in FY24; SY2025–26 financials are not yet available (blank). Where campuses differ, values are shown as Dimensions (Dim) / Overman (Ov).

Exceeding	Meeting/Low Risk	Approaching/Moderate Risk	Not Meeting

Indicator	SY22–23	SY23–24	SY24–25	SY25–26 (P)
Section 1 · Student Achievement				
Academic Proficiency — Reading	Baseline	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Approaching*
Academic Proficiency — Math	Baseline	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting*
Proficiency by Subgroup — Reading	Baseline	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Approaching*
Proficiency by Subgroup — Math	Baseline	Approaching	Not Meeting	Approaching*
Reading on Grade Level (Gr. 3)	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required
Academic Growth — Reading (NWEA)	Exceeding 60%	Approaching 35%	Dim 52% / Ov 31%	Exceeding*
Academic Growth — Language (NWEA)	Meeting 53%	Approaching 35%	Meeting (49/48%)	—[1]
Academic Growth — Math (NWEA)	Meeting 55%	Approaching 39%	Dim 53% / Ov 32%	Approaching*
4-Year Graduation Rate	Exceeding 92%	Exceeding 94%	Exceeding 97%	Exceeding 96%*
5- & 6-Year Graduation Rate	—[2]	Exceeding 96%	N/A	N/A
Post-Secondary Readiness — Accuplacer	Reported as Required	Exceeding 86%	Meeting 76%	Meeting R90%/ M83%*
Post-Secondary Readiness — Subgroups	Reported as Required	Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding*
Post-Secondary Activity Participation	Exceeding 81%	Approaching 61%	Meeting 71%	Not Meeting 53%*
FAFSA Support	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required
Chronic Absenteeism	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting
Section 2 · School Climate & Family Engagement				
Panorama — Family Results	Not Meeting*	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Panorama — Student Results	Not Meeting	Dim Appr / Ov Exc	Dim NM / Ov Exc	Exceeding
Panorama — Teacher Results	Exceeding	Dim NM / Ov Exc	Exceeding	Exceeding
Panorama — Staff Results	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Panorama Action Plan	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 3 · Organizational Sustainability				
Governing Board Effectiveness	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held (≥ 6)	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Timely Posting of Agendas / Minutes	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting	Meeting
Reporting Accuracy & Timeliness	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Board Training Completion	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Meeting
Facility Meets Requirements	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 4 · Financial Management & Viability (FY24 = SY23–24; FY25 = SY24–25)				
Current Ratio		Low Risk	Low Risk	Results will be based on FY26
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand	Moderate Risk	Moderate 43 days	Moderate 47 days	

[1] Beginning in SY2025-26, the Commission removed the NWEA MAP Language Usage as a requirement.
[2] The Commission did not begin measuring 5th and 6th year Graduation rates until SY2023-24.

Enrollment Variance		Low Risk	Low Risk	QTR 4 financials that are due on 8/15/26
Debt Default		Low Risk	Low Risk	
Total 3-Year Margin		Moderate Risk	Moderate Risk	
Debt-to-Asset Ratio		Low Risk	Low Risk	
2-Year Cash Flow		Low Risk	Low Risk	
Financial Obligations Coverage		Low Risk	Low Risk	
Financial Planning & Budgeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 5 · School Mission & Student Persistence				
Mission & Key Design Implementation	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Student Persistence — School Year	Meeting 86%	Dim 84% / Ov 88%	Meeting	—[3]
Student Persistence — Year-to-Year	Exceeding 95%	Dim 97% / Ov 89%	Exceeding	—[4]
Section 6 · School Customization (NWEA growth within 1 standard deviation)				
Reading within 1 SD	Exceeding	Meeting	Meeting	Dim 77% / Ov 62%
Math within 1 SD	Exceeding	Meeting	Meeting	Dim 45% / Ov 50%
Language within 1 SD	Exceeding	Approaching	Meeting	Dim 74% / Ov 64%

** In SY2022–23, all three required family Panorama scales scored in the Exceeding range nationally, but the indicator was rated Not Meeting because family participation (29%) fell below the 35% threshold. Baseline = the Maine Through-Year Assessment was new in spring 2023 and not rated that year. NM = Not Meeting; Appr = Approaching; Exc = Exceeding. (P) = preliminary Y data as of Q3.*

[3] Schools have until 8/15 to exit students from Synergy. School year persistence will be available at that time.
[4] Year-to-Year persistence looks at students enrolled on the last day of school who are still enrolled on 10/1. Data will be available once student enrollment counts are certified.

Intervention Status: Level 2 Improvement Plan

CRCS is currently operating under a Level 2 designation in the Commission's Intervention Protocol. In spring 2024, the Commission and the school jointly developed a two-year improvement plan addressing concerns in academic performance, chronic absenteeism, and student attrition; the Commission formally adopted that plan and designated the school Level 2 on January 27, 2026. The plan's goals are to be achieved by the end of the 2025–26 school year, providing the Commission with current performance data in advance of the school's renewal consideration. This is not the school's first experience with formal intervention: CRCS successfully completed an earlier Level 2 Intervention Plan, on which it had been placed in SY2021–22 and which it closed out at the end of SY2022–23 after meeting the majority of the Commission's targets. CRCS has reported progress on the current plan at least quarterly, and the picture as of its April 2026 update is one of meaningful but uneven improvement.

Student Achievement

The school's mid-year (winter NWEA) data show reading proficiency up approximately 9% and math up approximately 11% against the plan's 10% improvement targets, with results by subgroup more mixed — female students met or were on track in both subjects, while several male and special-education subgroups remained off track. Full-year proficiency and student-growth results were still pending spring 2026 testing at the time of the update.

Chronic Absenteeism

CRCS has met its absenteeism targets and continued to improve: Dimensions Academy fell from roughly 33% to the mid-20s and Overman Academy from roughly 48% to the high-30s, both on track to exceed the plan's goals. For context, approximately 75% of CRCS students come from Somerset County, where chronic absenteeism runs near 32%.

Student Persistence

Student persistence is off-track from the Intervention Plan goal. Against a target of 95 or fewer withdrawals per fiscal year, withdrawals rose from 107 in SY2023–24 to 112 in SY2024–25; the school reports improved year-over-year tracking and mid-year figures trending toward the target, but it has not yet demonstrated that the goal will be met. Final determinations across all three areas will rest on spring 2026 results, to be reviewed at the school's end-of-year meeting.

Momentum Strategy & Research

The Maine Charter School Commission has engaged Momentum Strategy & Research to conduct an independent academic evaluation of CRCS to help inform the renewal decision in October 2026, with Dr. Jody Ernst leading the work. Using NWEA MAP assessment data alongside its proprietary Alternative School and Performance Database, Momentum will examine four core questions central to understanding the academic trajectory of CRCS students who remain enrolled over time: whether longer-tenured students demonstrate stronger achievement and growth than newer or partial-year students; how far behind students are upon enrollment and whether those incoming deficiencies depress end-of-year state test scores despite moderately strong MAP results; whether a combined growth-and-achievement metric (scoring at grade level on the post-test or showing meaningful growth between pre- and post-test) offers a clearer picture of the school's performance; and how CRCS compares to similar schools statewide and nationally, including rural charter schools, alternative rural schools, and rural schools with comparable socioeconomic and special education profiles.

About This Report & the Renewal Process

The Maine Charter School Commission is the authorizer of nine charter districts. Each district holds a contract with the Commission containing a Performance Framework of indicators and targets it must meet, and is evaluated and reported on annually as required by law. Data are gathered through the Maine Department of Education, the charter districts, and site visits, as applicable. This report compiles the district's last four years of performance.

Charter Term & Renewal (20-A M.R.S. §2411)

A charter may be renewed for successive five-year terms; an authorizer may grant a renewal of up to fifteen years based on a school's performance, demonstrated capacity, and circumstances, and may attach specific conditions for necessary improvements. No later than June 30 of a school's fourth year of operation under a five-year term, the authorizer must issue this public performance report — summarizing the school's record to date against the Performance Framework (§2409) and giving notice of any weaknesses or concerns that could jeopardize renewal if not timely corrected. The school is given the opportunity to respond and to submit corrections or clarifications. Where a charter is expiring, the authorizer also provides renewal application guidance referencing the criteria and standards that will guide the decision, and gives the school the opportunity to:

- present additional evidence beyond this report supporting its case for renewal;
- describe improvements undertaken or planned; and
- detail its plans for the next charter term.

Application & Decision Timeline

No later than September 30 of a school's fifth (or final authorized) year under a charter term, a governing board seeking renewal submits a renewal application per the Commission's guidance. The Commission rules by resolution no later than 45 days after the application is filed. In making renewal decisions, the authorizer must ground its decision in evidence of performance over the charter term under the §2409 framework, ensure the underlying data are available to the school and the public, and provide a public report summarizing the evidence basis for the decision.

Revocation or Non-Renewal

A charter may be revoked at any time, or not renewed, if the authorizer determines the school failed to comply with the charter statute or materially violated the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures of the charter contract; failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations in the contract; failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or violated any law from which it was not exempt. In any such case, the authorizer must state its reasons in a resolution and provide the school an opportunity to be heard prior to a decision on revocation.

This summary is provided for context; the governing statutory language is found at 20-A M.R.S. §§2409–2411 and in the school's charter contract.

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Renewal Application

Section: X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance
Item: B. To Consider the Approval of Maine Academy of Natural Science's Renewal Application
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material:
MeANS Charter Renewal Report - Year 4.pdf
Renewal Application - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences-REDACTED.pdf
MeANS_Renewal_Site_Visit_Report.docx.pdf

MAINE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

Hinckley, Maine · Established 2012

Charter Renewal Report

Year Four Performance Review

Charter Term: School Years 2022–23 through 2025–26 (Years 1–4)

Performance outcomes on the Maine Charter School Commission Performance Framework

Prepared by

Maine Charter School Commission

June 2026

Note: Year Four (SY2025–26) outcomes are *preliminary*, reported as of Quarter 3, and subject to final year-end data. Several Year-Four figures will rise as fourth-quarter results are finalized.

Mission & Vision

Mission

The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) is a public charter high school that inspires and engages students through project-based, student-centered instruction immersed in the natural sciences of Maine with a focus on agriculture, forestry, and the environment. MeANS challenges all students to connect with their education to grow as individuals, interact with their communities, and lead fulfilling lives.

Vision

Respect. With an emphasis on honoring differences, MeANS encourages students to be compassionate and empathetic. Faculty, staff, and students employ restorative practices for community building and conflict resolution.

Responsibility. Individualized instruction builds confidence and empowers students to take ownership of their education. Skills such as self-advocacy and goal setting are developed alongside a commitment to helping others.

Community. MeANS connects with students and families through close relationships with advisors, teachers, and administrators. Students are expected to contribute positively to the school and are encouraged to take advantage of the larger learning context through volunteerism, internships, and college courses.

Two programs, one mission. MeANS delivers its mission through a **Campus** program serving students on a traditional cohort track, and the **Threshold** program, which re-engages students who have disengaged from or left other schools. Where the data allow, outcomes in this report are reported separately for the two programs.

Governance, Leadership & School Profile

Governing Board (SY2025–26)

Dr. Mary Callan *Board Chair*	**Greg Bazakas** *Vice Chair*
Whitney King *Treasurer*	**Nancy Findlan** *Member*
Dianna Gram *Member*	**Martha Harris** *Member*
Galen Lichterfeld *Member*	**Mackenzie O'Ben** *Member*
Emanuel Pariser *Member (Founder)*	**Anna Perkins** *Member*

Leadership Team

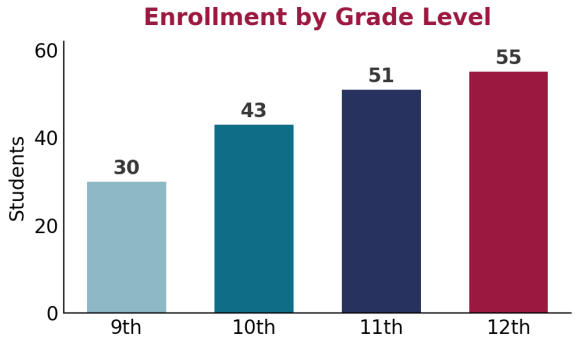
Ryan Anthony *Head of School*	**Patrick Henyan** *Assistant Head of School*
Evan Coleman *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*	**Bonnie Violette** *Director of Special Education*
Ashley Hyde *Business Manager*	

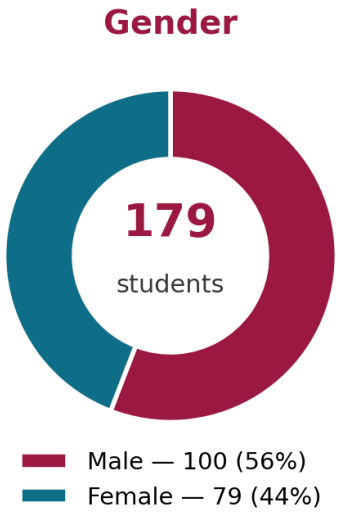
School Profile (SY2025–26)

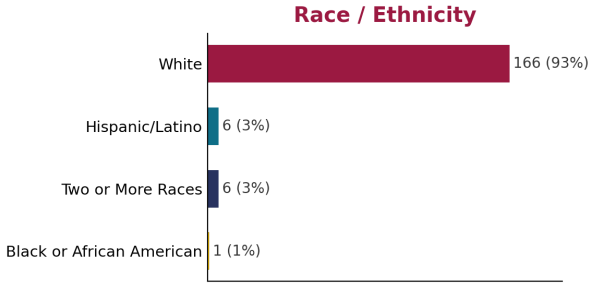
Year Opened	2012–13	**Years in Operation**	14
Location	Hinckley, Maine	**Grades Served**	9–12
Programs	Campus & Threshold	**Sending Districts**	24
Communities Served	Across Maine; primarily Kennebec & Somerset Counties	**Current Enrollment**	179 students

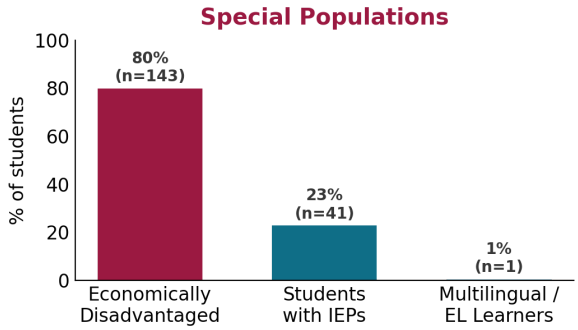
Student Demographics (SY2025–26)

MeANS serves 179 students drawn from communities across Maine, with the majority residing in Kennebec and Somerset Counties. The school enrolls a markedly higher-need population than the state as a whole: approximately four in five students are economically disadvantaged and more than one in five receive special education services. The charts below summarize the current student body.









Serving high-need students. At roughly 80% economically disadvantaged, MeANS enrolls more than double the statewide rate (about 37.5%), and its share of students with IEPs (about 23%) exceeds the state average. The school draws students from 24 sending districts and communities in both rural and small-city settings.

Performance Over the Charter Term

This section summarizes Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' performance across the four years of its current charter (SY2022–23 through SY2025–26) against the Commission's Performance Framework. Year-Four figures are preliminary. Throughout, outcomes are reported separately for the Threshold and Campus programs wherever the data allow, in recognition of the distinct populations each serves.

Student Achievement

State proficiency (Maine Through-Year Assessment) has been the school's most variable indicator and is a clear area of focus. In reading, MeANS exceeded the state in SY2023–24 (70% at or above expectations versus 61% statewide) before a decline in SY2024–25 (35% versus 59%, Not Meeting); preliminary Grade-10 reading for SY2025–26 rebounds to 74% at or above expectations. Mathematics has consistently trailed the state and remains the school's top academic priority — leadership has acknowledged the current tenth-grade cohort presents significant academic challenges and has responded with new course trajectories, an added Ed Tech academic-support position, AP Pre-Calculus, and a full-inclusion model in which special educators push into general-education classes.

College readiness, by contrast, has been a durable strength for both programs. On the Accuplacer, the share of seniors meeting college-readiness benchmarks has held within or above the framework's 75–85% target band every year — reading moved 76% → 85% → 82% → 84% and math has stayed near 84–86%. In preliminary SY2025–26 results, Campus students met the reading benchmark at 23 of 26 students and math at 25 of 26 students, while Threshold students met reading at 20 of 25 students and math at 19 of 25 students — evidence that both programs are preparing graduates for post-secondary success. Post-secondary activity participation has been Exceeding in every year of the term (93–100%), and roughly half of the most recent graduating class enrolled in a two- or four-year institution, with others entering apprenticeships or the workforce. The school credits its partnership with Gear Up RISE Maine here directly: in SY2024–25 MeANS reported the most college applications and acceptances in its history, and Gear Up also anchors the school's year-round FAFSA support through one-on-one family meetings and fall financial-aid nights.

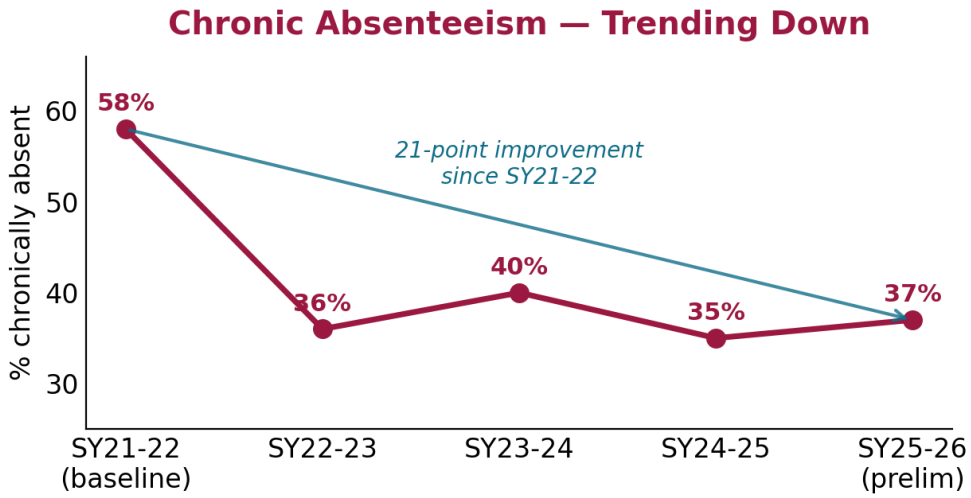
Graduation — Threshold and Campus

Graduation is the indicator where the Threshold/Campus distinction matters most. The state's four-year cohort model understates MeANS for two structural reasons: the Threshold program intentionally 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. As a result, the blended state-reported four-year rate dipped to 74% (SY2023–24) and 65% (SY2024–25), flagged Not Meeting, even as Campus four-year graduation remained very strong — 95% (SY2022–23) and effectively 100% of Campus seniors in the years since, with the Campus customization indicator Meeting or Exceeding each year. Threshold four-year rates are lower by design (81% in SY2022–23, 83% in SY2023–24) but represent students who would not otherwise have completed high school at all. Preliminary SY2025–26 shows an 88% four-year rate (43 of 49), with only six non-graduates (five Threshold, one Campus) and a 100% five-year rate among those taking a fifth year.

A Positive Trend: Chronic Absenteeism

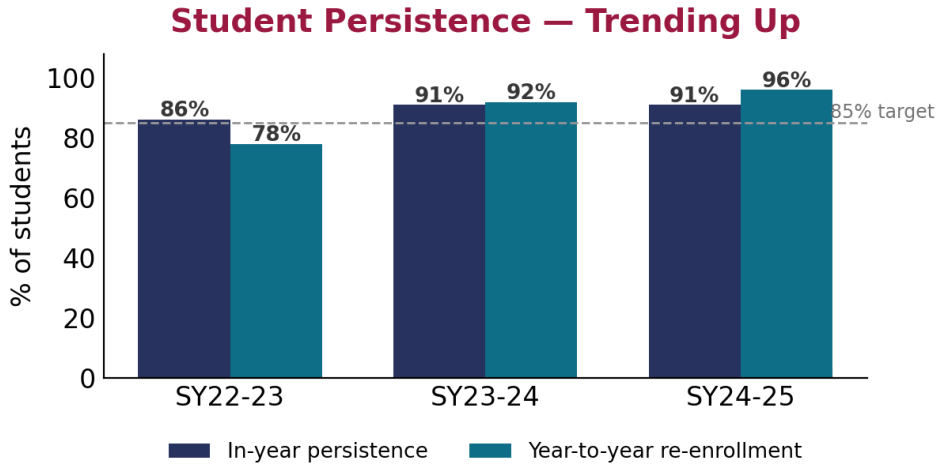
Chronic absenteeism remains above the framework's target and continues to be a focus for the school. The multi-year trajectory, however, is one of substantial improvement: from 58% at the start of the prior charter

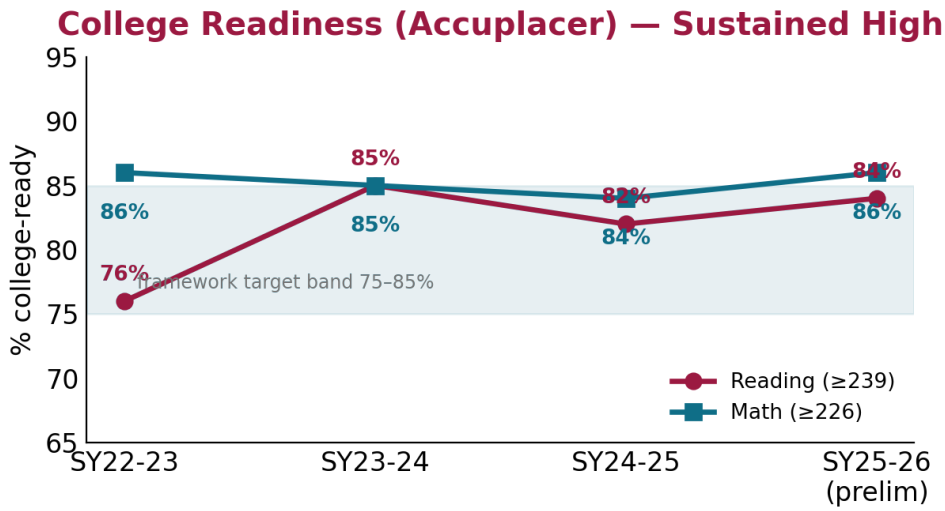
period (SY2021–22) to roughly 35–37% across the current term. The Commission has revised the absenteeism target to align with Maine's statewide average, recognizing that chronic absenteeism has risen across the state and that a regional benchmark is a fairer point of comparison than a fixed threshold. Against that benchmark, MeANS's rate—while still within the "does not meet expectations" range—is more consistent with the rates of the counties it draws from most, particularly Somerset (32%), than its standing against the former 10–18% target would suggest. A portion of the count also reflects students who withdrew before year-end (nine such students in SY2024–25). The school has deployed an attendance action committee, advisory-based outreach, incentives, and the Lift Up Attendance program.



Positive Trends: Persistence and College Readiness

Two of the school's clearest success stories are student persistence and sustained college readiness. In-year persistence improved from 86% to 91%, and year-to-year re-enrollment climbed from 78% to 96% — both now Exceeding expectations and a strong signal that enrolled students are the right fit for the school. In SY2024–25, demand allowed MeANS to hold its first-ever enrollment lottery and establish waitlists. College-readiness rates have held high and steady across the term, as shown below.





School Climate & Family Engagement

School culture and climate is a consistent, standout strength. On the annual Panorama surveys, family results have Exceeded expectations every year, with all required scales in the 99th percentile nationally compared to similar schools. Student results Exceeded expectations in SY2023–24 and SY2024–25 (all four scales above the average range), and teacher/staff results — an identified growth area at the start of the term (teacher results Did Not Meet in SY2022–23) — improved to Exceeding in SY2023–24 and Meeting thereafter. Feedback and Coaching remains the lowest scale and the school's noted focus for continued growth.

Organizational Sustainability & Governance

MeANS has consistently met the requirement for board meetings (six or more per year; seven in each of the last two years) and has performed strongly on reporting accuracy and timeliness and timely posting of board agendas and approved minutes (Exceeding or Meeting throughout). One governance area requires attention: the completion of required board training (Approaching with 90% completion). The board has navigated significant transition — including a mid-year Head of School change in December 2024, an interim co-leadership model, and the arrival of Ryan Anthony as Head of School in 2025 — and has since added five new members for SY2025–26, including two alumni, the parent of an alumnus, and founder Emanuel Pariser.

Financial Management & Viability

Financial sustainability is the school's most significant challenge. Near-term measures are generally low to moderate risk (current ratio and debt-to-asset ratio are low risk), but the sustainability measures — the three-year total margin and two-year cash flow — together with enrollment variance, fall in the high-risk category, driven by enrollment below budget during a deliberate staffing rebuild. In response, MeANS developed a multi-year plan that uses an FY25 operating surplus to offset budgeted losses in FY26 and FY27 while enrollment is rebuilt steadily toward a goal of 200 students by FY27. The school received clean independent audits for FY23 and FY24 and continues to monitor these metrics closely with its board.

Mission, Key Design & Student Persistence

Across the entire term, MeANS has Met expectations for Mission and Key Design Implementation, and its signature Natural Science Intensives — Exceeding their customization target — have become a defining

feature of the school, cited by students as among their favorite experiences and a growing draw for new enrollment. Combined with the persistence gains noted above, the evidence indicates a school delivering its distinctive mission with fidelity.

Community & Grant Partnerships

MeANS extends its reach well beyond its own staff through a network of partnerships and grants that show up directly in its Performance Framework results. The school's partnership with Gear Up RISE Maine supports post-secondary readiness across three areas — college application and acceptance, year-round FAFSA assistance, and Gear Up–funded math workshops that contributed to instructional gains. The ongoing collaboration with Rural Aspirations, together with RREV and MOLI grant funding, sustains the school's signature Natural Science Intensives — enabling field trips, guest presenters, and overnight experiences to Acadia National Park and beyond — while a Right of Use finance arrangement supports student transportation across the school's wide catchment area.

Partnerships that strengthen framework outcomes

- **Gear Up RISE Maine —** record college applications and acceptances (SY2024–25), year-round 1:1 FAFSA support and fall financial-aid nights, and Gear Up–funded math workshops.
- **Rural Aspirations —** ongoing collaboration supporting the Natural Science Intensives curriculum.
- **RREV & MOLI grants —** fund Intensive field trips, guest presenters, and overnight experiences (e.g., Acadia National Park).

Summary

MeANS enters renewal with a clear profile. Its strengths are substantial and well documented: an exceptional school climate, sustained college readiness across both programs, strong and improving student persistence, a distinctive Threshold program that graduates students who would otherwise have likely dropped out, signature Natural Science Intensives, and strong community and grant partnerships — notably Gear Up RISE Maine. These are balanced against three challenges — mathematics and state proficiency, chronic absenteeism, and financial sustainability — each acknowledged by the school and paired with documented improvement strategies, and two of which (absenteeism and persistence) show clear multi-year progress.

Performance Framework Outcomes — Four-Year Comparison

Ratings below reflect each year's reported outcome on the Commission Performance Framework. SY2025–26 is preliminary (as of Q3). Financial metrics first appeared on the annual report in FY24; SY2022–23 financial results were pending audit at the time of that year's report, and SY2025–26 financials are not yet available (shown as blank). Some indicators were added or revised over the term and appear only in the years reported.

Exceeding	Meeting/Low Risk	Approaching/Moderate Risk	Not Meeting

Indicator	SY22–23	SY23–24	SY24–25	SY25–26 (P)
Section 1 · Student Achievement				
Academic Proficiency — Reading (Gr. 10)	Baseline	Exceeding	Not Meeting	Preliminary
Academic Proficiency — Math (Gr. 10)	Baseline	Approaching	Not Meeting	Preliminary
Proficiency by Subgroup — Reading	Baseline	Exceeding	Not Meeting	Preliminary
Proficiency by Subgroup — Math	Baseline	Meeting	Approaching	Preliminary
4-Year Graduation Rate (state cohort)[1]	Meeting 88%	Not Meeting 74%	Not Meeting 65%	Meeting 88%
5- & 6-Year Graduation Rate	—[2]	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Preliminary 5-yr 100%
Post-Secondary Readiness — Accuplacer	Reported as Required	Exceeding	Meeting	Meeting
Post-Secondary Readiness — Subgroups	—	Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
Post-Secondary Activity Participation	Exceeding 100%	Exceeding 100%	Exceeding 93%	Exceeding 100%
FAFSA Support	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required	Reported as Required
Chronic Absenteeism	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting 37% (Preliminary)
Section 2 · School Climate & Family Engagement				
Panorama — Family Results	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Panorama — Student Results	Reported as Required*	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Panorama — Teacher Results	Not Meeting	Exceeding	Meeting	Meeting
Panorama — Staff Results	—[3]	Exceeding	Meeting	Exceeding
Panorama Action Plan	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 3 · Organizational Sustainability				
Governing Board Effectiveness	Reported	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk
Board Meetings Held (≥ 6)	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Timely Posting of Agendas / Minutes	Not Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting	Exceeding
Reporting Accuracy & Timeliness	Exceeding	Exceeding	Meeting	Exceeding

[1] Note on graduation rates: MeANS serves students who have not succeeded in other school environments. Under the state's methodology, a student who enrolls but never attends—and does not later enroll elsewhere—is counted as a MeANS dropout. The Commission should consider this when interpreting the reported graduation figures, which may not accurately represent outcomes for students who actively attend.

[2] The Commission did not begin measuring 5 and 6 year graduation rates until the beginning of SY2023-24.

[3] Staff results on the annual Panorama survey were not reported separately until the beginning of SY2023-24.

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Board Training Completion	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Not Meeting	Approaching 90% (Preliminary)
Facility Meets Requirements	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 4 · Financial Management & Viability (FY24 = SY23–24; FY25 = SY24–25)				
Current Ratio	Moderate Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk	Results will be based on FY26 QTR 4 financials that are due on 8/15/26
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand		High Risk 26 days	Moderate Risk 36 days	
Enrollment Variance		Moderate Risk	High Risk	
Debt Default		Low Risk	Low Risk	
Total 3-Year Margin		High Risk	High Risk	
Debt-to-Asset Ratio		Low Risk	Low Risk	
2-Year Cash Flow		High Risk	High Risk	
Financial Obligations Coverage		High Risk	Low Risk	
Financial Planning & Budgeting		Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Section 5 · School Mission & Student Persistence				
Mission & Key Design Implementation	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Student Persistence — School Year	Meeting 86%	Exceeding 91%	Exceeding 91%	—[4]
Student Persistence — Year-to-Year	Approaching 78%	Exceeding 92%	Exceeding 96%	—[5]
Section 6 · School Customization				
Campus — Individual Attendance Goal	Exceeding 94%	Approaching 67%	*MeANS removed this customized target at the end of the 2023-24 school year*	
Campus — Graduation	Exceeding 95%	Meeting 93%	Meeting 92%	Meeting 92%
Campus — NWEA MAP Participation	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding	Exceeding
Threshold — Engagement Goals	Meeting	Approaching 72%	*MeANS removed this customized target at the end of the 2023-24 school year*	
Threshold — NWEA MAP Participation	Meeting	Exceeding 100%	Meeting 83%	In Progress
Natural Science Intensives (3 of 4)	*MeANS added this customized target at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year*		Exceeding 88%	In Progress
Post-Secondary Opportunities (8+)	*MeANS added this customized target at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year*		Exceeding 100%	Exceeding 100%

** In SY2022–23 only the School Climate scale was available for student Panorama results due to a survey setup issue; the indicator is shown as reported rather than rated. Baseline = the Maine Through-Year Assessment was new in spring 2023 and not rated that year. (P) = preliminary Year-Four data as of Q3.*

[4] Schools have until 8/15 to exit students from Synergy. School year persistence will be available at that time.

[5] Year-to-Year persistence looks at students enrolled on the last day of school who are still enrolled on 10/1. Data will be available once student enrollment counts are certified.

About This Report & the Renewal Process

The Maine Charter School Commission is the authorizer of nine charter districts. Each district holds a contract with the Commission containing a Performance Framework of indicators and targets it must meet, and is evaluated and reported on annually as required by law. Data are gathered through the Maine Department of Education, the charter districts, and site visits, as applicable. This report compiles the district's last four years of performance.

Charter Term & Renewal (20-A M.R.S. §2411)

A charter may be renewed for successive five-year terms; an authorizer may grant a renewal of up to fifteen years based on a school's performance, demonstrated capacity, and circumstances, and may attach specific conditions for necessary improvements. No later than June 30 of a school's fourth year of operation under a five-year term, the authorizer must issue this public performance report — summarizing the school's record to date against the Performance Framework (§2409) and giving notice of any weaknesses or concerns that could jeopardize renewal if not timely corrected. The school is given the opportunity to respond and to submit corrections or clarifications. Where a charter is expiring, the authorizer also provides renewal application guidance referencing the criteria and standards that will guide the decision, and gives the school the opportunity to:

- present additional evidence beyond this report supporting its case for renewal;
- describe improvements undertaken or planned; and
- detail its plans for the next charter term.

Application & Decision Timeline

No later than September 30 of a school's fifth (or final authorized) year under a charter term, a governing board seeking renewal submits a renewal application per the Commission's guidance. The Commission rules by resolution no later than 45 days after the application is filed. In making renewal decisions, the authorizer must ground its decision in evidence of performance over the charter term under the §2409 framework, ensure the underlying data are available to the school and the public, and provide a public report summarizing the evidence basis for the decision.

Revocation or Non-Renewal

A charter may be revoked at any time, or not renewed, if the authorizer determines the school failed to comply with the charter statute or materially violated the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures of the charter contract; failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations in the contract; failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or violated any law from which it was not exempt. In any such case, the authorizer must state its reasons in a resolution and provide the school an opportunity to be heard prior to a decision on revocation.

This summary is provided for context; the governing statutory language is found at 20-A M.R.S. §§2409–2411 and in the school's charter contract.

MCSC
MAINE CHARTER
SCHOOL COMMISSION

2026 Renewal Application

Organization Name	The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences
Primary Contact Name	Ryan Anthony
Title	Head of School
E-Mail Address	ranthony@maineacademy.org
Telephone Number	207-419-6500
Fax Number	207-419-6650
Street Address	13 Easler Road
City	Hinckley
State	Maine
Zip Code	04944

Renewal Application Certification

Signature of Board Chair: _____ Date: 9/3/2026

Signature of School Leader: _____ Date: 9/3/2026

Organization Information

Name of School	**Maine Academy of Natural Sciences**
Year Opened	**2012**
Student on Waiting List	**0**
Maximum Enrollment (current charter)	**220**
Current Enrollment (SY2026-27)	**190**

Current Grade Levels Served

☐ PreK	☐ 4th	☑ **9th**
☐ KG	☐ 5th	☑ **10th**
☐ 1st	☐ 6th	☑ **11th**
☐ 2nd	☐ 7th	☑ **12th**
☐ 3rd	☐ 8th	

Based on Current (SY2026-27) Enrollment

Number of Male Students	**96**
Number of Female Students	**94**
Number of White Students	**169**
Number of Black or African American Students	**0**
Number of Hispanic/Latino Students	**7**
Number of Asian Students	**2**
Number of Other Students	**12**
Number of Students with Disabilities	**54 IEPs***
Number of Multilingual Learners	**1**
Number of Homeless Students	**8**
Number of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	**152****

*Count at the current moment; count could change when incoming records for new students become available
**Our estimated count of this current year based on previous year data; could change slightly due to incoming student records

Provide a brief description of the school, including an overview of the mission and vision, educational program, community and local connections, leadership and governance.

The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) is a charter public high school in Hinckley, Maine, serving students in grades 9-12 from communities across central and southern Maine. Founded in 2012, MeANS was Maine's first public high school centered on the natural sciences and has grown into a distinctive, student-centered learning community serving students from more than 20 Maine school districts.

MeANS's mission is to inspire and engage students through project-based, student-centered instruction immersed in the natural sciences of Maine, with a focus on agriculture, forestry, and the environment. The school challenges students to connect their education to the world around them, grow as individuals, interact meaningfully with their communities, and lead fulfilling lives. The vision of the school is rooted in developing capable, compassionate, and engaged young people who become critical thinkers and problem solvers, take responsibility for themselves and others, and contribute positively to their communities and environment. This vision is lived through MeANS's three core values: *Respect, Responsibility,* and *Community*.

At the heart of the MeANS educational program is the belief that students learn best when they are engaged in meaningful work that connects academic learning to the real world. MeANS's project-based curriculum combines rigorous academic instruction with hands-on, experiential learning. Students learn across traditional content areas while applying their knowledge through agriculture, forestry, environmental science, woodworking, blacksmithing, fiber arts and other student-driven experiences. The campus - with its farm, greenhouses, woodshop, aquaponics system, sugar shack, blacksmithing studio, arts yurt, trail system, and other learning spaces - functions as an extension of the classroom. The natural science Intensives program is a defining feature of the campus program, providing students with interdisciplinary, place-based experiences each season and opportunities to work with local experts and address authentic needs within their school, community, and environment. Students engage in two-week, seasonal learning experiences on a variety of topics that include beekeeping, oceans, forestry, farming, ice, alternative energy and fisheries, among others.

MeANS provides two distinct routes to success: *Campus* and *Threshold*. Campus students participate in the school's hands-on, place-based program in Hinckley. The Threshold program, on the other hand, is an innovative diploma-granting program designed for students whose life circumstances make regular attendance in a traditional school setting difficult. Threshold students come from a variety of backgrounds - some students have socioemotional or physical challenges that serve as a barrier to attending a traditional campus program in person. Other students include pregnant and parenting teens for whom the original program was designed for. Finally, the Threshold program has become a safe haven for credit-deficient students who take on the program as a final attempt at receiving a high school diploma. Threshold teachers work with students in their homes and communities, combining individualized academic projects with regular opportunities for connection, hands-on learning, and

participation on campus. Additionally, these students attend a day on campus, together, once a month through the school's Threshold Monday program. Both programs maintain the same commitment to rigorous, standards-aligned learning, student voice and choice, building strong relationships, and preparing for life after high school.

The school's educational model is intentionally relational and individualized. Small classes, strong advisory relationships, individualized support, student-led conferences, authentic assessment, and inclusive practices allow staff to meet students where they are while maintaining high expectations. During the 2025-2026 school year, teachers continued to expand access to college-level coursework through Advanced Placement and dual enrollment opportunities, while strengthening career and college preparation and ensuring that each senior develops a meaningful post-secondary plan. The school also continues to refine its restorative practices, using restorative conversations, circles, and family meetings to build accountability and strengthen community.

Community and local connections are central to the MeANS model. MeANS has developed an expanding network of relationships with farmers, foresters, environmental professionals, businesses, local colleges, Maine government employees, and community organizations. Students regularly learn alongside local experts during intensives or apprenticeship experiences. MeANS students also engage in community service through Community Learning Days, whether that be whole-school experiences or individual student-choice volunteering. The school also maintains strong family connections through weekly advisor-family communication and, beginning this past year, the MeANS Family Association. In addition, MeANS has a robust relationship with Mid-Maine Technical Center (MMTC) and Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC), where students can take technical and college classes alongside the MeANS curriculum. Finally, MeANS is proud of its longstanding partnership with GEAR UP Maine, which helps support MeANS students to explore future possibilities, plan for their future, and prepare for future careers and college.

MeANS's organizational structure is designed to support this distinctive educational model. The Head of School, in collaboration with the Assistant Head of School, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Director of Wellness, Director of Special Education, Threshold Lead, Business Manager and dedicated faculty and staff are responsible for the day-to-day leadership and operation of the school. The school is governed by an active Board of Directors that provides oversight of the school's academic, financial, operational, and strategic work through its full board and standing committees. In 2025-26, the Board maintained committees focused on Finance, Development, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and Executive/Governance matters, with regular reporting from school leadership as well as opportunities for students to present directly to the Board. The Board's diverse membership includes educators, alumni, administrators, community members, and individuals with expertise in areas including law and finance.

After fourteen years, MeANS remains committed to the central idea that launched the school: students thrive when education is relevant, relationships are strong, and learning is connected to the real world. The school continues to evolve and strengthen its academic program, student supports, community partnerships, governance, and organizational systems while remaining grounded in its mission and values. As MeANS enters its third charter renewal process, the school is proud of its growth while maintaining an openness to reflection, innovation, and continued improvement in service to its students and families.

Looking Back: The Record of Performance

This section provides an opportunity to supplement or augment the performance record. Schools should use the Renewal Performance Report as a guide for their responses and submit only evidence of performance related to the Performance Framework that is not included in the Renewal Performance Report and/or that the authorizer may not have. Responses should reference the specific criteria and benchmarks in the Performance Framework to which the information applies. Responses may include, but are not limited to, information about interim assessments or progress reports; evidence of performance on school- or mission-specific goals; and describe improvements undertaken at the school; and evidence of progress for any areas in which the school has not previously met or is not currently meeting the performance standard.

Responses should focus on information or evidence relevant to the school's academic, financial, and organizational performance and the school's performance expectations as defined by the authorizer's Performance Framework and the school's charter contract.

Renewal Recommendations will be based on all evidence of school performance in the record, including but not limited to, the school's responses in this section.

1. Academic Performance
    a. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether the school has met its performance expectations.
    b. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
    c. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract (if not already captured in Renewal Performance Report.
2. Financial Performance
    a. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.
    b. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates regarding the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework ,measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
3. Organizational Performance
    a. Provide any organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliance or other updates relevant to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.
    b. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.

Academic Performance

1. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether or not the school has met its performance expectations.

As we reflected on the Performance Framework, it confirmed our thoughts about the overwhelming successes that have come with our academic performance over the past five years as a school. Alongside a refocused effort to address chronic absenteeism and to improve student persistence, our commitment as an institution to raising the bar for our mission-driven learning experiences (intensives and specials), class academic rigor, and preparing students for an individualized post secondary experience is something that we are deeply proud of.

Through our assessment data we have seen an increase across the board in our Math and Reading scores, with this past year coming in as our highest scores to date on the Accuplacer for college preparedness, and our Through Year results improving substantially in both Reading and Math. In addition, we believe this math and reading growth was the highest growth in performance from any Maine charter public school from SY25 to SY26. We attribute this growth to a variety of factors; among them, the annual push to raise the bar academically at MeANS across students and staff, the consistent meaningful professional development opportunities for staff in improving our curriculum and pedagogy, and steady informal and formal feedback opportunities for each teacher at MeANS.

We also celebrated all 25 of our campus seniors graduating this past year through constant support from faculty and staff, as well as 18 (72%) of these seniors being accepted into a 4-year or 2-year college. Lastly, one of the areas that has been essential to our academic success is our whole-hearted embrace of our mission. Each year we have worked to strengthen outdoor, experiential learning for all of our students including all-school field trips to the Common Ground Fair and the Botanical Gardens. Additionally, our students are offered a plethora of business, career, and college trips during our Intensives and an immersive overnight experience for each of our grade-level cohorts each year.

2. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records.* Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

Culture of Academic Success: An important area to highlight is the effort that we have made as an institution to support and push students in their academic classes and in our Fall and Spring assessments. This focus has his paid dividends both in our increased participation in assessments (which has risen dramatically and remains in the 95-96 percent range each year), and in our end-of-semester Academic Project Showcases, in which students are tasked with presenting a summative project for their academic courses to their peers, faculty, and members of the community. These academic exhibitions were introduced five years ago, and have since served as an essential way for students to demonstrate their understanding of the material that they engage with in each of their classes.

AP Course Participation & Exam Scores: During our second year of offering two Advanced Placement courses (A.P. Language & Composition and A.P. Environmental Science), we continued to see strong engagement in these courses for students who were looking for more academically rigorous courses beyond the Dual Enrollment options. This year we continued to have around 20 11th and 12th grade

students complete at least one Advanced Placement course, with over a third of these students earning a 3 or higher on their exam to earn college credit.

3. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract (*if not already captured in Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report*).

Natural Science Intensive Academic Engagement: Every year, students at the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences take part in two-week, seasonal, Natural Science Intensives which are a core component of our curricular model. Every year, we have witnessed an increase in student engagement during these outdoor, interdisciplinary learning units, which typically provide students with multiple field trips a week across the state as they explore career opportunities and applied skills in Agriculture, Forestry, Maple Sugaring, and Beekeeping, to name a few. Over the past few years, student attendance and academic engagement has increased with 89% of students meeting expectations in 3-4 Intensives. Additionally, these opportunities have helped students to connect their classroom instruction to the world around them.

Financial Performance

1. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.

MeANS is current in meeting its financial obligations, including payroll taxes, employee benefits, accounts payable, and required lease payments. The school has not defaulted on any financial obligation during the review period.

The FY25 audited financial statements reported that MeANS had sufficient financial assets available to meet its general expenditures and ongoing obligations. The school received an unmodified audit opinion, and the audit did not identify any matter regarding its ability to continue as an ongoing concern.

During FY26, MeANS continued to meet its obligations while further reducing its long-term commitments. The school paid off all remaining fleet vehicle and bus lease obligations and had no remaining long-term finance lease liability as of June 30, 2026. Accounts payable also decreased from approximately $31,617 at the end of FY25 to approximately $16,050 at the end of FY26, demonstrating that the school remained current with its vendors and operating obligations.

The long-term liability reported in the FY26 unaudited financial statements primarily represents the accounting recognition of the Moody School rental agreement through FY27. A corresponding right-of-use asset is also reported on the balance sheet. This liability reflects an existing rental commitment and does not represent new borrowing, delinquent debt, or an unpaid financial obligation. The school's Moody School rental and copier agreements are incorporated into its approved budget and multi-year financial planning.

MeANS also ended FY26 with more cash and short-term investments than it held at the end of FY25. After separately identifying restricted funds and the designated outplacement reserve, the school reported approximately $354,600 in available cash. This provides sufficient resources to meet its current obligations and planned operating needs.

Taken together, the FY25 audited and FY26 unaudited financial statements demonstrate that MeANS remained current with its liabilities, paid off all fleet vehicle and bus financing, reduced its outstanding accounts payable, and maintained sufficient available resources to meet its remaining obligations. FY26 amounts remain unaudited and subject to final year-end and independent audit adjustments.

Please reference Audited Financial Statements FY25 & Unaudited Financial Statements FY26 submitted to Epicenter

2. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records*. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates regarding the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

The Renewal Performance Report identifies the three-year total margin, two-year cash flow, and enrollment variance as areas of financial risk. These historical measures reflect the effects of an enrollment decline following significant teacher attrition that reduced MeANS' instructional capacity. MeANS recognized that the lower enrollment count would affect future per-pupil funding and responded by developing a deliberate three-year financial and enrollment strategy.

The strategy was designed to retain savings during FY25 and then use those accumulated resources, as necessary, during FY26 and FY27 to preserve financial stability while rebuilding instructional capacity and enrollment. Because the three-year plan is updated and rolled forward annually, the beginning balances and future projections change as actual results become available. Performance for each completed year is therefore compared with the budget adopted for that year. Results from the first two completed years demonstrate that MeANS has met or exceeded both the operating and cash assumptions underlying the strategy.

In FY25, Year 1 of the strategy, MeANS intentionally retained the personnel savings resulting from vacant teaching positions rather than using those resources to create new recurring obligations. The school budgeted an operating surplus of $28,046 and a positive cash impact of $167,087. The FY25 audited financial statements reported an operating surplus of $42,273 and an increase in cash of $189,149. MeANS therefore exceeded its planned operating result by approximately $14,227 and its planned cash increase by approximately $22,062. These additional resources strengthened the financial bridge established for the remaining years of the strategy.

In FY26, Year 2 of the strategy, MeANS began reinvesting in Threshold instructional capacity to support enrollment recovery. The plan anticipated adding approximately one Threshold teacher and 10 students. Threshold enrollment increased from approximately 45 to 57 students, exceeding the enrollment-growth target.

The FY26 budget anticipated a net loss of $117,191 and the use of approximately $39,543 in operating cash after accounting for noncash depreciation, scheduled bus principal payments, and the planned use of $10,000 in Threshold grant funds. The unaudited FY26 financial statements demonstrate that actual performance was substantially better than those projections.

MeANS reported an unaudited FY26 net loss of approximately $24,629, which was approximately $92,562, or 78.98%, more favorable than budget. Total revenue was approximately $2.517 million, or

$5,145 above budget, while total operating expenses were approximately $2.551 million compared with a budget of approximately $2.619 million.

FY26 cash performance was also stronger than projected. Rather than using the approximately $39,543 in operating cash anticipated in the plan, total cash and short-term investments increased from approximately $846,437 at June 30, 2025, to approximately $862,992 at June 30, 2026—an increase of approximately $16,555. This represents a favorable cash variance of approximately $56,098 compared with the planned use of operating cash. Because the balances associated with restricted funds and the designated outplacement reserve remained unchanged, the increase strengthened the school's available operating cash.

The favorable FY26 results were driven by both improved revenue and active expense management. Employee-related expenses were approximately $62,881 below budget overall, including savings across administrative, support, Campus instructional, Threshold instructional, and Campus special education staffing. When positions remained vacant or operational needs changed, MeANS did not automatically replace the expense. For example, the unfilled Transportation Manager position contributed to the FY26 savings, and the position was subsequently reduced in the FY27 budget to align the recurring cost with current operational needs.

MeANS also paid off all remaining fleet vehicle and bus lease obligations during FY26. As of June 30, 2026, the school had no remaining long-term finance lease obligations. Its remaining long-term operating lease liability primarily reflects the accounting recognition of the Moody School rental agreement through FY27 rather than new borrowing.

The FY26 unaudited balance sheet provides further evidence of financial stability. MeANS reported approximately $993,167 in current assets and $289,124 in current liabilities, resulting in a preliminary current ratio of approximately 3.43. The school reported approximately $354,600 in available cash after separately identifying grant-restricted funds, the restricted Threshold donation, and the designated outplacement reserve.

The first two completed years of the strategic enrollment plan demonstrate measurable progress against the financial concerns identified in the Renewal Performance Report. MeANS exceeded its planned FY25 operating surplus and cash increase, exceeded its FY26 Threshold enrollment-growth target, and outperformed both its FY26 operating and cash projections. Most importantly, rather than drawing down the reserves accumulated in FY25 as anticipated, MeANS completed FY26 with a higher cash and short-term investment balance.

These results provide important context for the historical Performance Framework measures. Although enrollment remains an important revenue driver, MeANS has demonstrated that its financial stability is not dependent solely upon meeting one enrollment projection. The school has successfully adjusted staffing and other expenditures to actual enrollment and operational conditions while preserving more financial capacity than anticipated for the final year of the strategy. FY26 amounts remain unaudited and subject to final year-end and independent audit adjustments.

Organizational Performance

1. Provide any organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information *that may not be captured in authorizer records*. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliant or other updates relevant to the Renewal (Year 4) Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

Over the last five years, organizational stability at MeANS has steadily gotten stronger, showcased by marks of "not meeting", "approaching" and "meeting" from 2022-2025 to marks of only "meeting" and "exceeding" expectations across the board in 2025-2026. In the last school year, the school has held all board meetings, posted agendas/minutes in a timely and transparent manner, met every reporting deadline and ensured every board member completed a professional development training. Each board member, on top of this, has participated in at least one committee (ie. development, HR, finance, academics, etc) throughout the school year, contributing to the overall performance of the school.

In addition, MeANS facility meets local and state requirements for public school facilities. MeANS's Moody building and grounds (woodshop/makerspace barn, one acre farm, greenhouses, trail system, arts yurt, sugar shack) support the programming that is essential to the mission of MeANS. Teachers and staff regularly utilize all of MeANS's campus (both indoor and outdoor facilities) to design learning opportunities that help further the MeANS mission of inspiring and engaging students through project-based, student-centered instruction immersed in the natural sciences of Maine, with a focus on agriculture, forestry, and the environment.

2. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.

This past school year (2025-2026), MeANS fully met its goal of posting 100% of board agendas and minutes on time as well as 100% of its members completing at least one board training.

Looking to the Future

This section provides the opportunity to detail the school's plans for the next charter term. Consistent with NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, the authorizer will make its renewal decisions based on the school's track record of performance, and not on promises of future performance or improvement. Responses to the questions in this section will not be the basis for the authorizer's decision for renewal or non-renewal unless information is provided, or a significant, anticipated change or material modification is proposed which, if not approved, would endanger the future success and sustainability of the school. Any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model, and financial outlook and any proposed material modifications to the school's current charter contract must be proposed below and are subject to approval by the authorizer consistent with authorizer policy and state law. Failure to provide Maine Charter School Commission - Renewal Process Review and Recommendations requested or otherwise relevant information or failure to propose a material modification that is likely to impact the school's academic

or organizational success, or its financial sustainability shall be grounds for non-renewal and termination of the school's charter. If the school has any questions about whether information or a proposed change should be included, please contact the authorizer prior to submission of this application. If the school is proposing a material modification that, if not approved, would not endanger the sustainability of the school, this should be noted in the response and an explanation provided.

Proposed Grade Levels to be Served

☐ PreK	☐ 4th	☑ **9th**
☐ KG	☐ 5th	☑ **10th**
☐ 1st	☐ 6th	☑ **11th**
☐ 2nd	☐ 7th	☑ **12th**
☐ 3rd	☐ 8th	

Maximum projected enrollment at full growth for upcoming charter term, if renewed: 220

Adjustments to the Performance Framework, if any

1. Describe and state the rationale for any proposed changes in targets for the performance indicators as stated in the existing contract.

MeANS is not proposing any changes in targets included in the current Performance Framework as stated in the existing contract. We will, however, outline future plans in our school's model as it pertains to the subtopics below.

Describe, if applicable, plans to change the school's current model as it relates to the topics below. Include a timetable for implementation. *(Substantive changes, including, but not limited to, grade-span served, program delivery, or target population will require additional data analysis and research-based evidence after the initial charter contract is renewed.)*

Education Plan

1. **Mission**
   - 1.1. **MeANS mission remains: The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) is a public charter high school that inspires and engages students through project-based, student-centered instruction immersed in the natural sciences of Maine with a focus on agriculture, forestry, and the environment. MeANS challenges all students to connect with their education in order to grow as individuals, interact with their communities, and lead fulfilling lives.**
2. **Vision**
   - 2.1. **MeANS vision remains: Our students become engaged, self-directed learners. They develop habits that lead to taking responsibility for their own actions, as well as for the welfare of other students, their community and their environment.**
3. **Identification of targeted student population(s) and the community the school hopes to serve.**

3.1. MeANS will continue to serve students across 20+ school districts in central and southern Maine. Its campus program will target students who are inspired by the outdoors, want a hands-on learning experience and resonate with the three core values of the school. In addition, the school will continue to enroll students in its Threshold program who come from a variety of backgrounds, including students with acute life challenges, students with physical disabilities, students with acute socioemotional needs, students with severe high school credit deficiencies and pregnant or parenting teens.

4. Academic Program
   4.1. There are no substantial changes planned for the academic program, beyond more wholly fulfilling our mission, which includes additions of special classes such as forestry and additional AP-course offerings, including AP United States Government and Politics and AP Precalculus.
5. Special Student Populations
   5.1. MeANS continues to serve a higher special education population than the state average - 25% of its student population in 2025-2026 and a possible even higher percentage of its current student population in 2026-2027 (determined when new student records are confirmed - currently at 28%). MeANS also continues to serve a higher socioeconomically disadvantaged population than the state average - most recently 80% of its student population received free and reduced lunch in school year 2025-2026.
6. Assessment
   6.1. MeANS will continue to assess students twice annually in Reading and Math through the MAP Growth (9th and 11th grades), Maine Through Year (10th grade) and Accuplacer (12th grade) assessments. In addition, a select number of MeANS students will participate in Advanced Placement (AP) Assessments for each AP class that is offered each May. Additionally, MeANS will continue to deliver the annual Panorama School Climate Survey to families, teachers and staff and students each spring.
7. School Climate and Discipline
   7.1. MeANS intends to only further commit and implement its relational and restorative practices models, as described below.
   7.2. Relational Model: MeANS relational model, simply put, emphasizes a strong personal relationship between teacher and student. Students have an advocate in their assigned advisor and advisory group. And, teachers are encouraged to bring their passions inside the classroom and connect with students on an interpersonal level. All students and staff, at MeANS, go by their first name while on campus.
   7.3. Restorative Practices: At the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, we believe that all our students want to do well. Our approach to discipline is guided by the definition, which means to *teach*. An essential principle to this approach is that good relationships are central to learning, growth and a healthy school. In order to develop good relationships among all members of the learning community we focus on building, maintaining and when necessary, repairing those relationships. Repairing these relationships may include community circles, peer mediations, problem-solving circles, resolution circles and restorative conferences.

Organization Plan

1. School Calendar and Daily Schedule
   - 1.1. MeANS' calendar plans to remain consistent: an educational year split into four quarters with a two-week intensive weaved into each quarter. MeANS will continue its 11 month, 4-day school week that has existed since its founding, with exceptions for Threshold Mondays and Community Learning Days.
   - 1.2. MeANS' daily schedule remains the same for campus students - four core classes per quarter alongside advisory, a "specials" class and elective class.
   - 1.3. MeANS' daily schedule remains the same for Threshold students - individual work time mixed with daily homeroom and once weekly in-person instruction with the student's Threshold teacher.
2. Student Recruitment and Enrollment
   - 2.1. MeANS staff will continue to recruit and enroll students in its target population across central and southern Maine. The school plans to continue its marketing efforts to educate the public on MeANS and differentiate itself from Good Will-Hinckley. The MeANS staff will continue to visit and present at choice schools across central Maine, host multiple Open Houses for prospective families and students and give individual tours to interested students, as well.
3. Staffing and Human Resources
   - 3.1. Since its last charter renewal, MeANS has converted its Dean of Students position into an Assistant Head of School position. In contrast to contracting HR, Special Education Finance and IT services to Good Will-Hinckley, MeANS employs a part time Business Manager and manages Human Resources in-house. In addition, MeANS contracts a part-time Special Education Director and part-time IT Director.
4. Management and Operation
   - 4.1. There are no substantial changes planned for MeANS management and operation.
5. Parent and Community Development
   - 5.1. MeANS will continue to prioritize meaningful family and community relationships. MeANS started its MeANS Family Association in school year 2025-2026 and plans on continuing that work through the next charter renewal period. Additionally, MeANS plans on strengthening its community connections made through its Intensives program partnerships.

Governance Plan

1. Governing Body
   - 1.1. The MeANS Board plans on continuing to engage its members in various committees to further support the school's growth such as development, academic affairs, human resources and finance. Additionally, the Board will continue to offer in-house professional development opportunities to its members alongside encouraging its members to participate in Maine Charter School Commission approved workshops. Finally, the's Board 3 Year Strategic Goals include the development of a board member recruitment plan based on school needs to be fully implemented by June 2029.
2. Governing Board Composition
   - 2.1. The Board will continue to seek diversity in its members' backgrounds, including finance, educational leadership, development and fundraising, social work and legal expertise.

Business and Financial Services

1. Budget
   - 1.1. MeANS will continue using an annually updated, multi-year budgeting process that incorporates actual enrollment, instructional capacity, prior-year results, known contractual obligations, and reasonable assumptions regarding revenue and expense growth. The FY27 Board-approved budget represents the final year of the school's current strategic enrollment plan. The longer-term draft forecast anticipates returning to a balanced operating position in FY28 and a surplus position in FY29 as enrollment and instructional capacity continue to grow.
   - 1.2. Enrollment remains an important revenue assumption, but MeANS' financial planning does not rely solely upon achieving one enrollment projection. Administration will regularly compare actual enrollment, staffing needs, revenues, and expenditures with the approved budget and multi-year forecast. Staffing and other operating expenses may be expanded, deferred, reduced, or restructured as necessary to align the school's cost structure with actual enrollment and available resources.
   - 1.3. The multi-year forecast will be updated annually as actual results become available. This rolling approach allows MeANS to revise beginning balances and future assumptions while maintaining the broader goals of protecting operating cash, rebuilding enrollment, and maintaining sustainable programming.
2. Financial Management
   - 2.1. MeANS plans to continue its current system of ongoing financial oversight and operational management. The Business Manager and Head of School meet regularly to review financial performance, funding, expenditures, grant activity, reporting requirements, and emerging concerns. This allows financial or operational issues to be addressed as they arise rather than waiting until the end of a reporting period.
   - 2.2. The Board receives formal financial reports throughout the year, including the Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, performance against budget, and explanations of material variances. The Finance Committee meets periodically for a more detailed review of budget performance, cash position, funding, forecasts, and other financial matters before or in addition to reporting to the full Board.
   - 2.3. During the next charter term, MeANS intends to continue strengthening its multi-year forecasting, budget-to-actual analysis, cash planning, and reserve management. Financial decisions will be evaluated not only for their immediate budget impact but also for whether they create recurring obligations that can be sustained under realistic enrollment and revenue assumptions. Temporary grants and fundraising proceeds will generally be used for time-limited or supplemental purposes rather than to establish unsupported ongoing costs.
3. Facilities
   - 3.1. MeANS plans to continue working closely with Good Will-Hinckley to manage its facilities, monitor infrastructure needs, and control increasing occupancy and utility costs. The school's focus will remain on maintaining a safe, functional, and appropriate learning environment while addressing repairs and infrastructure concerns in a planned and financially responsible manner.
   - 3.2. Energy and utility costs will continue to receive particular attention. MeANS will work with Good Will-Hinckley to monitor the performance of the existing solar, heating,

ventilation, and other building systems and to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce avoidable operating costs. Future budgets will continue to incorporate reasonable allowances for rent, utilities, maintenance, and repairs.

3.3. MeANS is not currently proposing a material change to its educational program or operations related to facilities. If a future facility opportunity or significant infrastructure change would materially affect the school's financial outlook or charter operations, MeANS would conduct the appropriate financial analysis and seek Board and Charter Commission review or approval, as applicable.

4. Transportation

4.1. MeANS' transportation plan is focused on maintaining the existing fleet in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective condition. The school paid off all remaining fleet vehicle and bus lease obligations during FY26 and does not currently anticipate an immediate need for large-scale fleet replacement.

4.2. Future budgets will continue to provide for fuel, insurance, inspections, registration, routine repairs, and preventive maintenance. MeANS also intends to build a designated vehicle replacement reserve over time. This is a long-range asset-management practice rather than an indication that replacement purchases are imminent. The reserve will allow the school to plan for the eventual replacement of individual vehicles when their useful lives are complete, avoiding the need to absorb an unexpected major expenditure or rely unnecessarily on new financing.

4.3. Fleet condition, mileage, repair history, safety, and program needs will be evaluated regularly. Replacement decisions will be based on the condition and useful life of each vehicle rather than on a predetermined replacement date.

5. Insurance

5.1. Insurance costs, including property, liability, vehicle, health, and other employee-benefit coverage, are expected to remain an area of increasing expense. MeANS will continue to monitor coverage, claims experience, employee needs, and market pricing and will competitively evaluate or bid coverage when appropriate.

5.2. MeANS recently entered into a new employee health insurance arrangement with Anthem. The selected plan provides competitive coverage for employees while supporting responsible cost management for the school. During the next charter term, MeANS will continue reviewing plan performance, employee experience, renewal pricing, and available alternatives to maintain a sustainable balance between employee benefits and organizational cost.

5.3. Future budgets will include reasonable assumptions for insurance increases rather than relying on level funding. Material changes in coverage or cost will be reviewed through the annual budget process and communicated to the Finance Committee and Board.

6. Food Service

6.1. MeANS intends to continue its food-service relationship with Good Will-Hinckley. The current arrangement provides students with convenient access to food service on campus while allowing the program to be administered through an established operational structure.

6.2. MeANS will continue actively managing this relationship by reviewing service quality, student access, program participation, reimbursement revenue, contractual costs, and compliance requirements. Food-service revenue and expenditures will be monitored separately so that changes in enrollment, meal participation, reimbursement rates, or service costs can be identified and addressed.

6.3. The school's goal is to continue providing a dependable and well-managed food-service program that is accessible to students and financially predictable for MeANS. Any future changes to the arrangement will be evaluated based on student needs, service quality, compliance, and overall financial sustainability.

Education Service Providers (as applicable)

1. GEAR UP Maine Rise
   1.1. SY27 marks MeANS fourth year of a successful partnership with GEAR UP Maine Rise. The school plans on keeping and improving its existing services with GEAR UP Maine Rise which include, but are not limited to, overnight college visits, career exposure trips, career exploration workshops, family financial aid nights, early college and dual enrollment course support, academic tutoring, college testing preparation, youth leadership opportunities, staff professional development and scholarship awards.

Addressing Special Issues

This section provides the opportunity to address special issues that the school foresees may have a dramatic impact on the school's educational programs, governance, facilities, services, or budget and to address concerns raised in the Maine Charter School Commission's Performance Report for Renewal.

Chronic Absenteeism: One challenge MeANS has been addressing over the past five years is chronic absenteeism. As a result, over the last five years, chronic absenteeism has been trending down at MeANS, with a 21-point improvement from SY21-22 (58% chronic absenteeism) to SY25-26 (37% chronic absenteeism). At the same time, MeANS staff recognizes student absences continue to be an area of growth for the school and we have set attendance targets as one of our highest priorities over the next five years. This upcoming year (2026-2027), MeANS is deploying an attendance-focused professional learning community while partnering with Count ME In! to brainstorm possible solutions as a team. The school is also implementing a tiered approach to attendance this upcoming school year, which includes, but is not limited to, personal phone calls, 1:1 attendance interviews, student competitions and weekly advisor outreach. In addition, MeANS staff plans to connect its academics-related professional learning community with its attendance-related professional learning community to brainstorm how the proactive work of engaging classes with clear expectations can impact student's attendance. Finally, MeANS plans to employ a Community School Coordinator role, thanks to the generous support of a Charter Commission Innovation grant. This role will help the school community to problem-solve barriers to attendance and employ home visits with students and families struggling with attendance. Our goal is that these measures, in sum, will help us chip away at improving our chronic absenteeism percentages over the next charter renewal term and get more of our kids, consistently, at school.

Graduation Rates: Over the past five years, we have evolved significantly as an institution that follows through in supporting all of our students from their arrival to MeANs until graduation and beyond. These efforts have been bolstered by our relationship with GEAR UP Maine, and we have seen a dramatic improvement in both our graduation rate (this year we had all 25 of our campus seniors graduate), and in post secondary planning and success (with 18 of these 25 students being accepted into a 2-4 year school). What has remained a challenge for us as a school, is that the state reports our graduation rate as any student who has withdrawn from MeANS, whether this be to pursue a career or for other life changing circumstances, and who has not re-enrolled in school. Because of the population of students that the Threshold program was built for — students who have faced significant challenges in their schooling and are often very credit deficient or are up against major barriers with mental and physical health — a traditional 4-year path to graduation is often not these students trajectories. As we head into the next five years at MeANS, we are focusing our efforts on supporting all of our students as they navigate their path to graduation, and increasing our support for students transitioning out of high school so that they can feel successful on an educational path that works for them.

Turnover

Governing Board Turnover

Please complete the Governing Board Turnover table below. List the number of board members joining and leaving the board in each school year of the current charter period.

School Year	Total Membership	Members Joining	Members Departing
SY2025-26	11	Lee Karter Nancy Findlan Greg Bazakas Emanuel Pariser Galen Lichterfeld Mackenzie Oben	Erin Brown Robert Dodge Sally Beaulieu Kim Patnode Dana Doran
SY2024-25	10		Michael Muir Jesse Wechsler Shannon Webber
SY2023-24	13	Mary Callan Robert Dodge Dianna Gram Erin Brown	Cheryl Bulmer Scott Byrd Cheryl Mercier
SY2022-23	12	Martha Harris D Whitney King Michael Muir Anna Perkins	Tom Edwards Scott Cyrway Robin Cyr

Explanation of Governing Board Turnover

Over the past five years at MeANS, Board Members have generally stayed on for the full length of their maximum term - 4 years. In specific circumstances, Board members have stepped down because of professional, family or health obligations. A Board member has never been removed from the MeANS Board. When a Board Member departs, the Board Chair and other members help advertise the open position on the MeANS website, newsletter and other promotional materials to try to find a suitable replacement, whether that be a member with specific finance, legal, development or other expertise.

Staffing and Staff Turnover

Please complete the Staffing and Staff Turnover table below. List the following information for each year of the current charter period: the number of administrators, teachers, and other staff (actual member and FTE) and the number of departures of administrators, teachers, and other staff during and at the end of each school year. Provide a brief explanation of administrator and teacher departures.

	SY2022-23	SY2023-24	SY2024-25	SY2025-26
Administrators				
Number and FTEs	2	2	2	2
Departures during school year	0	0	1 Head of School	0
Departures at end of school year	1 Assistant Head of School/Special Ed. Director	0	0	0
Teachers				
Number and FTEs	14	14	16	16
Departures during school year	0	1 Threshold Teacher	2 Social Studies Special Ed ELA	
Departures at end of school year	0	5 4 Threshold Teacher 1 Campus Teacher SS	2 2 Threshold Teacher	1 ELA

Other Staff				
Number and FTEs	**14 (5FTE)**	**16 (8FTE)**	**17 (8FTE)**	**16 (8FTE)**
Departures during school year	**2 2 Ed tech 1 Business Manager**	**0**	**3 2 Custodian 1 Sp. Ed. Office Assistant**	**2 1 Transportation Director 1 Custodian**
Departures at end of school year	**1 Dean of Students**	**4 1 Dean of Threshold 3 Bus Drivers**	**1 Custodian**	

Explanation of Staff Turnover

Since the 2022–23 school year, the school has experienced several teacher departures resulting from a variety of personal and professional circumstances. Some teachers have left their positions due to childbirth and the need to prioritize family responsibilities and parental leave. Others have relocated due to personal or family circumstances, resulting in transitions to new communities and employment opportunities. These departures were driven by individual life circumstances rather than performance concerns and represent the natural movement of staff over time.

During this same period, the school has also undergone staff restructuring to ensure that staffing assignments and resources remain aligned with student enrollment, instructional needs, and the evolving priorities of the school. As a result, some leadership positions and assignments have changed, contributing to additional staff departures. Throughout these transitions, the school has worked to thoughtfully manage staffing changes while maintaining instructional continuity and ensuring that students continue to receive strong academic and supportive services.

Student Turnover

Please complete the Student Turnover table below. List the following information for each year of the current charter period: the number of students and the number of departures of students during and at the end of each school year. Provide a brief explanation of student departures.

	SY2022-23	**SY2023-24**	**SY2024-25**	**SY2025-26**
Number of Students	**175**	**194**	**180**	**190**
Departures during school year	**20 Transfers**	**20 Transfers**	**14 Transfers**	**15 Transfers**
Departures at	**47 Graduates**	**45 Graduates**	**55 Graduates**	**42 Graduates**

end of school year	1 Transfer	7 Transfers	4 Transfers	3 Transfers

Explanation of Student Turnover

Over the past five years, student departures have reflected a range of educational pathways and individual circumstances. The most frequent reason for transfer has been to enrollment in another public school within the state, followed by homeschooling and adult education programs. A significant portion of transfers involve students who enrolled at the school but ultimately did not attend; in these cases, the school frequently receives a records request from another public school within the first several weeks of the school year. Student mobility should also be considered within the socioeconomic context of the school community, where nearly 80% of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Families may experience economic and housing-related challenges, including the need to relocate, contributing to a degree of student mobility within the school's enrollment patterns.

A smaller number of students have discontinued formal schooling after reaching age 17. The majority of students in this category participated in the Threshold Program, which serves students who have experienced barriers to school engagement and are at elevated risk of dropping out. [redacted] The school regularly reviews enrollment and withdrawal data as part of its institutional assessment and continuous improvement processes.

Financial Plan

As part of your renewal Application, please embed a copy of your school's approved three-year financial plan directly into this document. This plan should reflect your school's anticipated revenues and expenditures for the upcoming charter term and demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of your school going forward.

To embed the plan, insert it as a copy below (rather than linking to an external file), so that it remains part of your complete Application. Please ensure the plan you include is the version formally approved by your school's board.

The FY27–FY29 forecast, attached, is currently marked as a draft and is scheduled for Board approval on September 10, 2026. Our 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. After our September vote, we are happy to provide the final approved version to the Commission.

FY27 - FY29 DRAFT THREE-YEAR FORECAST – Scheduled for Board Vote September 10, 2026 - Board Vote set for 9/10/2026

	ACTUAL COUNT FY27 SY26/27 Budget	PROJECTED COUNT FY28 SY27/28 Budget	PROJECTED COUNT FY29 SY28/29 Budget	
Prior Year Campus	122	132	132	
Prior Year Threshold	57	65	75	
	179	197	207	
Percentage of Special Ed Students				
Current Year Campus	132	132	132	
Current Year Threshold	65	75	75	
	197	207	207	
Revenue	SUBSIDY BASED ON 179	SUBSIDY BASED ON 197	SUBSIDY BASED ON 207	
TUITION - REGULAR SECONDARY (Less deferred revenue)	$ 2,465,357.99	$ 2,657,294.03	$ 2,825,157.90	Increase students in FY28 by 21 - explains increase
Title I	$ 122,118.98	$ 122,118.98	$ 122,118.98	Federal Funding
Title II	$ 9,189.60	$ 9,189.60	$ 9,189.60	Federal Funding
Title IV	$ 12,290.54	$ 12,290.54	$ 12,290.54	Federal Funding
Title V (SRSA)	$ 13,519.00	$ 13,519.00	$ 13,519.00	Federal Funding
MLTI	$ 32,572.00	$ 32,572.00	$ 32,572.00	State Funding
Local Entitlement Grant	$ 79,521.46	$ 81,000.00	$ 83,000.00	Federal Funding
Donation/Fundraising	$ 15,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	Based on FY26 Actual
Private Grants		$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	Based on FY26 Actual
Food Service Reimbursement Revenue	$ 58,000.00	$ 62,000.00	$ 64,000.00	Increased enrollment
Investment Income	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	Tech Fees, Bank Interest, Greenhouse Sales & Merch Sales
TOTAL REVENUES	**$ 2,835,569.57**	**$ 3,052,984.15**	**$ 3,224,848.02**	
State Subsidy Received on Behalf of Charter Commission	*$ 61,705.34*	*$ 67,106.05*	*$ 71,263.61*	
TOTAL REVENUE INCL CHARTER COMMISSION 2.45%	$ 2,897,275.91	$ 3,120,090.19	$ 3,296,111.63	
Expenses				
Operating Costs				
Contacted Services - IT SVCS	$ 18,500.00	$ 18,500.00	$ 18,500.00	IT Svcs & Cyber Security Ins
Contracted Services - MOA WITH GWH - Food Service	$ 118,000.00	$ 118,000.00	$ 118,000.00	$51K in admin fees plus plate cost - offset by Nutrition reimbursement
Purchased Services - Nursing Service	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	Currently no school nurse or telehealth plan for services
PURCHASED SVCS - ADVERTISING	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	
PROFESSIONAL FEES - AUDIT	$ 21,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	Audit and 990 Filing Fee
PROFESSIONAL FEES - LEGAL	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00	
PROFESSIONAL FEES - RECRUITEMENT	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00	
DEPRECIATION	$ 42,000.00	$ 37,000.00	$ 37,000.00	Based Depreciation Schedule - no new assets added, declining deprecation write-off
PURCH SVCS - COMMUNICATIONS	$ 3,660.00	$ 3,660.00	$ 3,660.00	
GEN'L INSURANCE	$ 21,278.70	$ 22,555.42	$ 23,908.75	6% Increase
VEHICLE INSURANCE	$ 14,828.00	$ 15,717.68	$ 16,660.74	6% Increase
PURCH SVCS - PR/BNK/ADMN FEES	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	
PURCHASED SERVICE - FINANCIAL SOFTWARE	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	
PURCHASED SERVICES - COPIERS	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	
SUPPLIES - OFFICE	$ 5,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	
SUPPLIES - POSTAGE	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,500.00	$ 2,500.00	
Facilities Costs				
LEASE/RENTAL BLDG/IT SERVICES	$ 239,500.00	$ 240,000.00	$ 240,000.00	FY27 - 1 addl mnth of Keyes & $5K for on campus staff person rental , FY28 & FY29 A
PROPERTY SVCS - BLDG R & M	$ 5,200.00	$ 5,200.00	$ 5,200.00	
UTIL - ELECTRICITY	$ 58,000.00	$ 54,000.00	$ 54,000.00	reduced cost in FY28 & FY29 hopes that solar infrastructure is fixed
UTIL- OIL HEAT/PROPANE	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,600.00	$ 7,260.00	10% Increase YOY
SUPPLIES - JANITORIAL & EQUIPMENT & REPAIR	$ 4,000.00	$ 4,500.00	$ 5,000.00	
Program Costs				
Transportation				
Vehicle Lease				
Interest Expense on Bus Leases	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Other - Repairs, Registration, Inspections	$ 40,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	
Fuel	$ 48,000.00	$ 52,800.00	$ 58,080.00	10% Increase YOY
Instructional/Education				
Student				
PURCHASED SVCS - EDUCATIONAL				

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PURCHASED SVCS - SOFTWARE	$ 8,669.00	$ 9,535.90	$ 10,489.49	10% Increase YOY
TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT + REPAIR	$ 33,572.00	$ 33,572.00	$ 33,572.00	MLTI Grant funded Chromebook inventory based on largest class - fully reimbursed
MISC - CONTING Out-Placement - Education	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	
MISC - CONTING Out-Placement - Athletics	$ 3,000.00	$ 5,000.00	$ 7,000.00	
SPECIAL EVENTS	$ 5,400.00	$ 5,940.00	$ 6,534.00	10% Increase YOY
SUPPLIES - INSTRUCTIONAL	$ 18,225.00	$ 20,047.50	$ 22,052.25	10% Increase YOY
SUPPLIES - GREENHOUSE	$ 3,000.00	$ 4,000.00	$ 5,000.00	
Staff				
SERVICES - PROFESSIONAL DEVEL	$ 2,500.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	
PURCHASED SVCS - STAFF TRAVEL	$ 20,250.00	$ 24,000.00	$ 24,000.00	
Special Ed Services				
PURCHASED SERVICES - SP ED DIRECTOR	$ 27,500.00	$ 30,000.00	$ 30,000.00	
PURCHASED SERVICES - SP ED/SPEECH/OT	$ 12,000.00	$ 15,000.00	$ 15,000.00	
PURCHASED SERVICES - SP ED/Interpreter				
PURCHASED SERVICES - SOFTWARE	$ 2,200.00	$ 2,200.00	$ 2,200.00	
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES	$ 15,000.00	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	
Total Non-compensation costs	$ 834,782.70	$ 863,828.50	$ 879,117.23	
2.45% Subsidy Pass-through to Charter Commission	$ *61,706.34*	$ *67,106.05*	$ *71,263.61*	
TOTAL NON-COMPENSATION COSTS INCL CHARTER COMMISION 2.45%	$ *896,489.04*	$ *930,934.55*	$ *950,380.84*	
budgeted compensation	$ 2,087,059.52	$ 2,187,326.75	$ 2,282,317.33	2% Increase for EE, 1 Additional TH Teacher Added Per Year, 8% Health Ins, 6% Den
total operating expenses	$ 2,921,842.22	$ 3,051,155.25	$ 3,161,434.56	
net budgeted profit/(loss)	**$ (86,272.65)**	**$ 1,828.90**	**$ 63,413.47**	

Cash Needed from Reserves Prediction			
Net profit/loss	$ (86,272.65)	$ 1,828.90	$ 63,413.47
Add back depreciation	$ 41,892.00	$ 36,684.00	$ 36,684.00
Total	$ (44,380.65)	$ 38,512.90	$ 100,097.47
Less Notes payable principal of buses	$ -	$ -	$ -
This FY cash impact	$ (44,380.65)	$ 38,512.90	$ 100,097.47
Cash pulled from Threshold Grant	$ 10,000.00	$ -	$ -
Cash pulled/added from OPERATING CASH	**$ (34,380.65)**	**$ 38,512.90**	**$ 100,097.47**

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MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Charter Renewal Site Visit Report

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

Hinckley, Maine

Renewal Site Visit Conducted: September 9, 2026

Report Date: September 15, 2026

Public Hearing: September 23, 2026

Prepared by the Maine Charter School Commission

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission

Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission

David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

www.mainecharterschoolcommission.org

School Profile

REPORT DATE	September 15, 2026
SCHOOL NAME	Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS)
ADDRESS	13 Easler Road, Hinckley, ME 04944
GRADES SERVED	9–12
ENROLLMENT	Approximately 189 students (as reported at the time of the visit)
YEAR OPENED	2012
PROGRAMS	Campus Program; Threshold Program
SITE VISIT DATE	September 9, 2026
REVIEW TEAM	Lana Ewing (MCSC); Amy Allen (MCSC); David Hartman (Venn Education)

Site Visit Purpose

Chapter 3 of the Commission's rules provides that once an application for renewal is filed with the Commission in compliance with the rule, the Commission shall appoint a team to review the application and conduct a site visit. This report documents that visit and is distributed to Commission members in advance of the public hearing on the school's renewal application.

The primary purpose of site visits is to inform authorizer decisions — both imminent, such as assessing a school's readiness to open, and longitudinal, when a visit is undertaken mid-term as part of routine monitoring. In a renewal year, the visit is conducted at the beginning of the year for the express purpose of gathering evidence of the school's fitness to be renewed.

The purpose of the visit is to gauge the overall progress a school is making toward the mission and goals outlined in its charter. In most cases the authorizer already possesses quantitative data about that progress — academic performance, attendance rates, graduation rates, and other annual outcomes — so a site visit helps explain the context behind that data and explores the school's fidelity to its approved program. Site visits also provide Commission staff the opportunity to review and analyze documentation that may be better understood onsite, such as factors impacting attendance or rates of academic growth across subgroups.

Site visits are a mechanism for collecting additional evidence regarding a school's performance against the expectations memorialized in its contract, and they contribute to the body of data the Commission uses to make a renewal recommendation. This report is one input among several; it does not by itself constitute the Commission's renewal decision, which is made by a vote of the Commission.

Site Visit Process

The Commission's renewal site visits are based on both the criteria set forth in the school's performance framework and the school's alignment with its mission. The categories in the performance framework

are student achievement, school climate and family engagement, organizational sustainability, financial management and viability, faithfulness to the charter and the law, and the school's customized criteria. The findings in this report are organized to follow those categories.

Team members used the Commission's Monitoring Site Visit Manual (adopted April 2019, updated April 2023) to plan for and conduct the visit. Prior to the visit, the team met to review the purpose of the visit, to review the school's historical and current strengths and areas for growth, and to develop school-specific focus group and interview questions to supplement the Commission's standard question sets.

Review Team

- Lana Ewing — Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Amy Allen — Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- David Hartman — External Reviewer, Venn Education

Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus group interviews were held with groups at the school. Each group was asked a standard set of questions drawn from the Site Visit Manual, as well as school-specific questions created for this visit. Focus group interviews held by the team:

- Administration / Leadership Team: Head of School and members of the academic and student-support leadership team
- Governing Board: five participants, including the Board Chair and committee chairs
- Teachers and Staff: nine participants representing English, mathematics, science, social studies, agricultural science, special education, educational technicians, and the Threshold team, with tenure at the school ranging from second-year staff to founding staff
- Students: nine students in grades 9–12, with enrollment at the school ranging from two weeks to four years
- Families: six families representing students in the Campus and Threshold programs, including current seniors, underclassmen, and graduates

At each session the Site Visit Team provided assurance that the information discussed in focus groups is not for personnel evaluation purposes, will not be reported in potentially identifying ways, and is gathered to help the team better understand systems, processes, and trends at the school. Consistent with that assurance, individual students, families, and teachers are not identified in this report.

Classroom Observations

Classroom and school observations were conducted for the purpose of collecting evidence and observing school-wide trends, not to evaluate individual teaching or teachers. Observations were conducted with a school leader, and the team selected the classrooms it visited in order to see a variety of subjects and grade levels. Observations conducted by the team:

- Grade 9 — Environmental Science (high school)
- Grade 11 — World Cultures / Philosophy (high school)

- Grade 12 — Physics (high school)

Renewal Timeline

The following dates govern the balance of the renewal process:

- September 9, 2026 — Renewal site visit conducted at the school
- September 23, 2026 — Public hearing on the renewal application
- October 13, 2026 — Renewal recommendation presented to the Commission for a vote

The School's Mission

The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences opened in 2012 and serves students in grades 9 through 12 in Hinckley, Maine. The school's program is built around hands-on, project-based learning connected to the natural environment, agriculture, and the working landscape of rural Maine, and around a relational model in which every student is known well by at least one adult in the building.

The school's approved mission is as follows:

> *The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) is a public charter high school that inspires and engages students through project-based, student-centered instruction immersed in the natural sciences of Maine with a focus on agriculture, forestry, and the environment. MeANS challenges all students to connect with their education to grow as individuals, interact with their communities, and lead fulfilling lives.*

Each element of that mission was visible during the visit. Project-based instruction is the school's default mode of teaching rather than an occasional enrichment. Student-centered practice is structured through advisory, a multi-year relationship every student holds with one adult. Immersion in the natural sciences of Maine — with the specific emphasis on agriculture, forestry, and the environment named in the mission — was evident in the Intensives program, the agricultural team and facilities, the forestry work the board described, and the classrooms the team observed. The mission's charge to help students grow as individuals, interact with their communities, and lead fulfilling lives was the language stakeholders themselves reached for most often, in Threshold outcomes, community learning days, showcases, and student work connected to local businesses and tradespeople.

Across every focus group, stakeholders described the mission in strikingly consistent terms. Leadership described educating students in the natural sciences with instruction that is "very Maine and hands-on," delivered through an Intensives program and an advisory structure intended to support students toward fulfilled lives. Board members described a school that serves students through hands-on project learning connected to the environment, anchored by core values of relationships, responsibility, respect, and community. Teachers described treating students as whole people and removing barriers to learning. Students described being expected to be creative, to participate, and to demonstrate the school's core values in everything they do. Families described a school that is "not bound by traditional ways of thinking."

The school operates two distinct programs under one charter. The Campus Program serves students on site through cohort-based, project-based coursework. The Threshold Program serves students who have disengaged from school elsewhere, meeting them in their homes, at libraries, and in community settings, and bringing them to campus on Threshold Mondays. Both programs were repeatedly described by stakeholders as expressions of the same mission rather than as separate enterprises.

> *"The mission is real, and every stakeholder group talked about it — what it means to get outside, that I can get up and move my body, that learning is like the real world." — Site Visit Team debrief*

Site Visit Findings

Findings are organized by the categories of the Commission's performance framework. Each section summarizes the evidence gathered during the visit and identifies both strengths and opportunities for continued growth. Where this report cites quantitative results, those results are drawn from the school's self-reported data and performance framework submissions and should be read alongside the Commission's annual performance framework outcomes.

A. Mission Alignment

The team found strong and consistent evidence that the school is operating in fidelity to its approved mission. Mission alignment was the most consistently corroborated finding of the visit; it was independently described in similar language by the leadership team, the governing board, teachers and staff, students, and families.

Evidence gathered

- Intensives — multi-week, agriculture- and environment-anchored units culminating in projects — were described by every stakeholder group. Teachers reported approximately three field experiences per Intensive, per grade level, generally built around a person making a living doing something outdoors in Maine.
- Students described mission-specific learning without prompting, including a three-day retreat at which they built mason bee hives and then taught another area school how to build them, a mock trial with a judge and jury, and work at the Carpenter's Boat Shop.
- Teachers reported that the curriculum is built from scratch by the faculty with support from the academic lead, anchored in essential questions and real-world problems, and aligned to standards, with outside support from partners such as Rural Aspirations.
- Educational technicians and non-instructional staff reported meaningful input into curriculum and Intensive design; one staff member described creating a watercolor elective that drew 33 students.
- Families cited blacksmithing, greenhouses, the sugar shack, agricultural coursework, and a senior capstone kiosk project as reasons they chose and stayed with the school.
- The board reported that each board meeting opens with a student presenting work, and that the Academic Affairs Committee observes classrooms and reports back to the full board on whether the school is meeting its mission.

Strengths

- Mission is not aspirational language at this school; it is the operating structure of the instructional day.
- The Threshold Program fills a genuine niche for students who have not found success in conventional settings, and it is understood by staff and board alike as core to the mission rather than peripheral to it.
- Staff at all levels — teachers, educational technicians, and agricultural staff — report both freedom and support to design mission-aligned learning experiences.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Board members themselves identified that mission and core values could be referenced more visibly and consistently in board meetings, and have committed to adding this to a future agenda.
- The school may benefit from documenting the alignment between Intensives, Threshold field experiences, and the Maine Learning Results in a form that can be shared with the authorizer and with prospective families.

B. Student Achievement

The school administers a coherent set of assessments and has, by its own account and by the team's observation, substantially improved its culture around assessment during this charter term. Results are strongest in English language arts and in post-secondary readiness indicators; mathematics remains the school's clearest academic concern.

Assessment and data systems

- Through-year assessment in grade 10; Accuplacer in grade 12; MAP Growth in grades 9–11; Empower as the standards-based grading and tracking platform; Panorama for climate, attendance, and behavior data.
- Leadership reported that assessment participation has been high and that the culture around assessment has improved markedly, with smaller testing groups and an explicit message that doing one's best matters to the school.
- MTSS meetings are held weekly and are the primary structure in which academic, attendance, and behavior data are reviewed. Teachers described separate 9/10 and 11/12 groupings, with staff looped in across groups where students overlap.
- Advisors contact families weekly, using Panorama data to ground those conversations.
- Teachers reported project-tuning sessions with colleagues, feedback from the academic lead, and feedback from students as the mechanisms by which assessment practice improves.

Results reported to the team

- Graduation rate reported at 92.3%. The team notes that state reporting conventions complicate the graduation-rate calculation for this school, particularly given Threshold enrollment patterns.
- ELA proficiency results were identified by the team as a high point of the term, scoring above the state average.
- Accuplacer results were identified as a high point, because they indicate the students are ready for college level courses, supporting the school's dual-enrollment and post-secondary work.

- Post-secondary opportunities have expanded, including four AP courses and dual enrollment through Kennebec Valley Community College. Leadership reported that 18 of 25 seniors in the most recent class were headed to a two- or four-year college.
- Mathematics performance was identified by both the team and school leadership as the area of greatest academic need, though Accuplacer testing data is strong. 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. Accuplacer mathematics results reached 86% math in SY2025–26, at the top of the school's historical range.
- Leadership identified the current grade 10 cohort as carrying substantial need and described a deliberate effort to build academic culture with that group.

Supports for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students at risk

- The staff roster reported to the team includes approximately 35 adults in total, with school administrators, two teachers in each core subject, three educational technicians, three special education staff, and an agricultural team.
- Teachers described close collaboration with special education staff to modify assignments, and reported that the school's small size makes differentiation feasible because staff know students individually.
- The school added an educational technician position to support students who need a quieter space and adult support during study hall, with an explicit focus on executive functioning.
- Leadership described starting the year with placement by level and ensuring the special education team pushes in at the appropriate level of need.
- Remediation blocks are used, and retention decisions are typically considered beginning in the sophomore year. Two fifth-year seniors were enrolled at the time of the visit.
- All students take four years of each core content area plus a rotating special (health, woodworking, blacksmithing, and similar offerings).

Strengths

- A genuine, functioning multi-tiered system of supports with weekly cadence and clear follow-up.
- Rising academic expectations — Advanced Placement (AP) offerings, dual enrollment, and teachers who can articulate what it means to exceed a standard and explain that to students.
- Standards-based assessment practice that gives students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery, particularly in Threshold.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Mathematics performance. This is the school's most significant academic opportunity.
- Rigor in daily classroom instruction. As detailed in the Classroom Observations section, the team saw engaging entry points that could have been more consistently pushed toward deeper student thinking.
- College-readiness access. One family raised the absence of PSAT/SAT administration. Leadership indicated the SAT was not offered because no seniors intended to take it; the team encourages the school to ensure interested students have access to the free test regardless of cohort-level demand.

- Student achievement recognition, particularly within the Threshold Program, was identified by families as an area that could be strengthened.

C. School Climate and Family Engagement

School climate is a clear strength. Students, families, and staff described a safe, respectful, restorative environment in which students are known well by adults. The team heard no significant contrary evidence from any stakeholder group.

Evidence gathered

- Every adult serves as an advisor, and students keep the same advisor throughout their enrollment. Students and families independently identified the advisory relationship as the single most important support structure at the school.
- A social worker supports emotional needs and a student-support administrator addresses behavior; staff described a clear division of roles and a restorative practices protocol that includes one-on-one preparation before restorative circles.
- Students reported feeling safe. Several described feeling as safe at school as at home, including students who identified as having more complex needs; several described prior schools where they had not felt safe.
- Students described peer accountability in their own words — “if I see something, I say something” — and reported being checked by peers as well as by adults.
- Leadership described the school’s trust-building work in detail, including the example of a student who arrived significantly credit-deficient and became a peer leader.
- The school holds whole-school celebrations twice weekly and issues weekly recognitions for students observed living the core values.
- Families reported weekly communication from the homeroom teacher or advisor, quarterly showcases, and community learning days. One family described a school dance at which students from very different backgrounds participated together, and noted the school’s attention to making prom accessible to all students.
- Approximately 80% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Staff spoke candidly about rural poverty and about the school’s practice of supplying materials students may not have at home.

Strengths

- A restorative culture that students can describe accurately and that families explicitly praised as producing “learning moments rather than punishment.”
- Advisory as a durable, multi-year relationship — described by families as what sets the school apart from other public schools.
- Consistent, proactive family communication, including outreach for absences.
- An inclusive environment in which students from diverse and often difficult backgrounds report feeling safe and respected.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Chronic absenteeism remains the school's top-identified challenge and is the focus of the board's three-year strategic plan. Attendance has improved during the term, but rates remain above the state average and the school lacks baseline data on students' attendance prior to enrollment and after departure by which they might note progress.
- Transportation. Students raised busing challenge this fall, but said this was a new, short-term problem due to lack of a bus driver and not a consistent challenge: a driver vacancy has required use of a van, students reported lost class time and late arrivals to after-school activities, and the school is exploring options including staff obtaining Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs).
- Staffing levels and burnout. Students observed that staff are stretched thin and that the Head of School covers classes; open positions cited include special education, mathematics, transportation, educational technician, and school nurse. The team notes staff did not themselves raise burnout.
- The 0–4 standards-based grading system is not well understood by some, particularly with respect to translating it into a weighted GPA for college applications. The school is responsive when asked, but the team encourages a proactive family-facing explanation.

D. Governance and Organizational Sustainability

The board has matured considerably during this charter term. It separated from Good Will-Hinckley in 2022 and has since built governance infrastructure, adopted a structured self-evaluation practice, and developed a deliberate approach to recruitment. The board demonstrated appropriate knowledge of the school's academic and financial position and appropriate distance from day-to-day management.

Evidence gathered

- The board receives a report addressing student achievement, graduation rates, and assessment results at each meeting, along with updates on professional development and new initiatives. Board members reported being engaged in policy development, citing the cell phone policy as a recent example.
- Students present their work at each board meeting. The board is considering adding a student representative.
- Board members reported that the information they receive is sufficient to govern, and that they do not hesitate to ask leadership for more.
- School leadership attends committee meetings; the Academic Affairs Committee conducts classroom observations and reports back to the full board.
- The school leader evaluation framework was revised in 2023–24 and includes rubric categories in seven areas. The leader completes a self-reflection, goals are set jointly with the HR Committee, progress is reviewed during the year, and the full board conducts a review and makes a recommendation in the spring.
- The board uses Board on Track for governance documentation and conducts an annual board self-evaluation, on which it scores well.
- Board turnover during the term was attributed largely to bylaw-driven term limits rather than member dissatisfaction. An ad hoc committee currently leads recruitment and is expected to be absorbed into the Executive Committee.

- The board has adopted a non-voting membership practice as a trial period before full membership, and has added non-voting members to the Development Committee.
- The board describes decision-making at the school as “bottom up.”

Strengths

- A clear, documented, and consistently applied school leader evaluation process.
- Directional, skills-based recruitment rather than opportunistic recruitment — the board can name the gaps it is recruiting against.
- Appropriate board engagement with academics through a functioning Academic Affairs Committee.
- Candor. Board members volunteered past governance missteps, including a staffing reduction made without full board involvement, and described the corrective change in practice.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Identified skill gaps include development and — most importantly in the board’s own view — publicity and social media, in order to differentiate the school’s identity from the Good Will-Hinckley brand.
- Strategic follow-through. Board members candidly noted that ideas generated at summer planning sessions are not always circled back to, and that resource allocation against strategic priorities is an area where the board “could be more intentional.”
- Enrollment and marketing. At approximately 189 students with a fully enrolled ninth grade class, leadership and board both identified a marketing challenge. Partnership with K–8 and middle schools was raised as a strategy worth pursuing.

E. Financial Management and Viability

The board and administration demonstrate strong financial oversight practice and a clear-eyed understanding of the school’s financial position. The underlying tension — that an innovative, small, rural, hands-on program costs more per student than the charter funding formula provides — is well understood at every level of the organization and is not being avoided.

Evidence gathered

- An active Finance Committee, chaired by a board member with relevant expertise, meets regularly and reviews budget-to-actual reporting looking both backward and forward.
- The Director of Finance provides full quarterly and annual financial reports at a detailed level and, in the board’s description, makes the numbers understandable to members without financial backgrounds.
- Significant board meeting time is devoted to understanding the school’s financial position and the changes required going forward.
- The board has taken concrete cost actions during the term, including eliminating a rented house that carried cost regardless of occupancy.
- The board has worked to establish the expectation that members contribute financially and help secure donations, which members described as a meaningful cultural shift.

- The Intensives program has produced business-community relationships that generate both awareness and, in some cases, employment for students — an economic benefit the board values beyond its instructional value.

Strengths

- Financial reporting practice is a genuine strength and exceeds what the team typically observes at schools of this size.
- Financial constraint is understood as a shared organizational reality rather than an administrative problem; students themselves raised funding as the school's central limitation.

Opportunities for continued growth

- Margin and cash flow require continued attention, as does the school's exposure to enrollment variance given the per-pupil funding model.
- Fundraising capacity. The board should set and track an annual development goal, define the endowment strategy, and continue recruiting members with development capacity and connections.
- The entrepreneurial incubator concept — grant-supported student enterprise in areas such as aquaponics and blacksmithing, in an economically distressed region — was raised by multiple board members as an unrealized opportunity with both mission and revenue potential.

Classroom Observation Summary

The team observed three classrooms across grades 9, 11, and 12, spending approximately fifteen minutes in each. Observations were conducted with a school leader and are reported here as school-wide trends. Consistent with the Site Visit Manual, the purpose of these observations is to collect evidence of school-wide practice, not to evaluate individual teaching or teachers, and no individual teacher is identified.

Trends observed

Time use and student engagement

- Engagement was high in all three classrooms. In the grade 11 World Cultures lesson, the team recorded 100% engagement during a paired discussion protocol. In the grade 12 Physics lesson, all students were silent and attentive during a video segment and worked independently and respectfully on an applied task.
- Entry points were consistently strong. Each lesson opened with a substantive hook — an environmental trade-off prompt in grade 9, a philosophical paradox in grade 11, a buoyancy demonstration sequence in grade 12 — and students engaged readily with each.
- Students initiated academic requests of their teachers, including asking for additional writing time, which the team read as evidence of genuine investment in the work.

Clarity of objectives

- In all three observations, the lesson aim or learning point was not posted. Posting the aim would make the goal of the lesson clear to students and would strengthen students' ability to self-assess against it.

Depth of thinking and expectations

- Opportunities to push student thinking further were available but not always taken. In one lesson, a full-class discussion drew low participation where small-group discussion at tables would likely have produced broader engagement.
- During a video segment, no students took notes and there was no accountable task attached, making it relatively easy for a student to opt out of the thinking work.
- Expectations for student focus were not consistently clear in one observation, where a table of students continued side conversation and a redirection to move seats was not followed through.

Mission alignment in instruction

- All three lessons were recognizably mission-aligned: environmental systems thinking, applied physics with a student-constructed instrument, and inquiry-based discussion practice.
- Teachers demonstrated strong content knowledge and evident interest in their subject matter, which came through to students.

Taken together, these observations support the finding noted under Student Achievement: the school has built genuine student engagement, and its next instructional frontier is converting that engagement into consistently rigorous cognitive work. The specific, actionable levers observed were posting lesson

aims, attaching accountable tasks to passive activities, and routinely asking students to justify their reasoning.

Conclusion

The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences presents as a school operating in strong fidelity to its approved mission. Across five stakeholder groups interviewed independently, the team heard a consistent account of what the school is for and how it works: hands-on learning connected to the natural environment and the working landscape of Maine, delivered by adults who know every student well. Students articulated the mission in their own words. Families described transformations in children who had struggled elsewhere. Staff described both freedom and support to build the program. The board described its governance work in terms that matched what the team observed in classrooms.

The school's academic indicators are, on balance, positive and improving. English language arts results and Accuplacer outcomes were high points of the term; post-secondary opportunities have expanded meaningfully through AP and dual enrollment; attendance has improved from a difficult baseline; and the graduation rate is strong. The Threshold Program emerged as an outcome the Commission should understand more clearly: families described it as the reason their children graduated at all, and in more than one case as having saved a life. Against national credit-recovery and alternative-program norms, its outcomes are notable.

The school's challenges are real, acknowledged by the school itself, and largely structural rather than a product of poor practice. Chronic absenteeism remains high despite genuine improvement. Mathematics performance lags other subjects. Classroom instruction, while engaging, has room to become more consistently rigorous. And the school's financial margin is thin, with real exposure to enrollment variance in a funding formula that does not readily accommodate the cost of the program the school has built.

The team notes as a distinct positive that school leadership and the governing board engaged with these challenges without defensiveness. In every session, the areas the team identified as opportunities had already been identified by the school, and in most cases were already the subject of a strategic goal, a committee assignment, or a staffing decision. That disposition is itself evidence relevant to the Commission's renewal consideration.

A draft renewal recommendation will be provided to the school on September 28, 2026, with a 48-hour review period, and the renewal recommendation will be presented to the Commission for a vote on October 13, 2026. Nothing in this report should be construed as indicating the Commission's renewal decision, which rests with the Commission.

Respectfully submitted by the Renewal Site Visit Team

Lana Ewing, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
David Hartman, External Reviewer, Venn Education

Coversheet

New Governing Board Members

Section: XI. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)
Item: A. New Governing Board Members
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: MeVA_New_Governing_Board_Member__Erin_Shanahan_redacted.pdf

Public Charter School Governing Board
Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School _ Maine Virtual Academy

Name of Board Member _ Erin Shanahan

Email Address _ [Redacted by Commission]

Occupation _ Educator/Library Director/Small Business Owner

Please respond to the following questions:

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

   I am a strong supporter of education. I am also a strong advocate of different pathways for students to be educated. I want to support students, families, educators and admin through this pathway. I want to help create, strengthen, bond and broaden the MEVA school community.

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

   My understanding is MEVA is open to all students in Maine, grades 7-12 with enrollment number limits as “seats” are available. Students are coming to MEVA for a multitude of reasons but simply because they need a different type of education that suits their needs of education where a ‘sit-in-school’ is not the top option for their forward progress.

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

   Maine Virtual Academy
   RSU24- Teacher of 10 years; 3rd, 4th, 9-12 SS, Adult Ed
   including nomination for Hancock County Teacher of the Year
   Town of Sullivan Town Council
   RSU24 Teachers Union Board Member- Treasurer

Updated 1.9.17

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

   I have the background of working on executive committees, running a small business, and teaching both brick & mortar and virtually.

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

   I will help ensure and oversee the fufillment of policies, missons, benchmarks, and budgets .

Sign_[Redacted by Commission] Date_ 9/3/2026

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

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

Updated 1.9.17