Maine Charter School Commission

Executive Committee Meeting

Published on November 3, 2026 at 8:47 AM EST

Date and Time

Tuesday November 3, 2026 at 1:00 PM EST

Location

Zoom

Agenda

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
I.	**Opening Items**			**1:00 PM**
	A. Record Attendance		Amy Allen	
	B. Call the Meeting to Order		Brian Langley	
II.	**Committee Reports**			**1:00 PM**
	A. School Performance Committee	FYI	Tom Keller	
	B. Finance Committee	FYI	Jim Handy	5 m
III.	**Agenda Items - To Be Voted On**			**1:05 PM**
	A. To Consider the Approval of the Minutes from the 10/6/26 Committee Meeting	Vote	Lana Ewing	5 m

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
IV.	**Agenda Items - For Discussion**			**1:10 PM**
A.	DRAFT SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report (and Annual Portfolio Summary)	Discuss	Lana Ewing	5 m
B.	MCSC SY2026-27 Legislative Engagement	Discuss	Lana Ewing	5 m

V. Updates / FYIs/Reminders

- *ELCs Innovation Fund Request (Year-Long Canoe Building Course)*
- *The November 10th Commission Meeting will be held at Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (185 Lancaster Street, Portland) beginning at 10:00am.*

VI. Upcoming Executive Committee Meetings (Zoom)

December 2026

- NO MEETING

January 5, 2027

- 1:00-2:00pm
- Zoom

VII. Closing Items

A.	Adjourn Meeting	FYI	Brian Langley	

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

Coversheet

To Consider the Approval of the Minutes from the 10/6/26 Committee Meeting

Section: III. Agenda Items - To Be Voted On
Item: A. To Consider the Approval of the Minutes from the 10/6/26 Committee Meeting
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: DRAFT Executive Committee Minutes - 10.6.26.docx.pdf

Maine Charter School Commission

Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 6, 2026

Time: 1:00-2:00pm

Location: Zoom

Members present: Brian Langley, Tom Keller, and Jim Handy

Members absent: None

Staff present: Lana Ewing, Amy Allen

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The Chair called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda, which included committee reports, approval of minutes, and the renewal recommendations scheduled for a vote at the October 13 Commission meeting.

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the September 1, 2026 meeting. Members requested an amendment to correct a reference from "Maine School of Management" to "Maine School Management Association." *On a motion by Jim Handy, seconded by Tom Keller, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2026 meeting as amended.*

2. Committee Reports

School Performance Committee. Tom Keller reported on the School Performance Committee meeting. Both renewal schools have received and accepted their reports, and no comments have been submitted to date.

Finance Committee. Jim Handy, the new Finance Committee chair, reported that there were no significant changes to the FY27 financial report. He also discussed the renewals of Community Regional Charter School (CRCS) and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS), emphasizing the importance of considering fiscal impacts on local communities.

Staff will send notes from the Finance Committee meeting to the Finance Committee chair for his report at the October 13 Commission meeting, and will include him on the distribution of those notes for future Finance Committee meetings.

3. Renewal Recommendations

Staff summarized the renewal recommendations for CRCS and MeANS, both of which are scheduled for a vote at the October 13 Commission meeting. The School Performance and Finance Committees each support the recommendations.

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Community Regional Charter School (CRCS). Staff recommended a five-year renewal with two conditions, based on concerns regarding math performance, chronic absenteeism, and enrollment:

- Quarterly meetings between Commission staff and school leadership; and
- Classroom observations twice yearly across all three campuses.

Jim Handy and Tom Keller each expressed support for the recommendation after initially having some hesitation. Because of a vacant seat on the Commission, four affirmative votes are required to approve the CRCS renewal.

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MEANS). Staff presented the school's positive turnaround, highlighting improvements in student persistence, post-secondary participation, and financial management, and recommended a five-year renewal without conditions.

4. October 13 Commission Meeting

The Committee discussed logistics for the October 13 Commission meeting, to be held at the Fireside Lounge at the University of Maine at Augusta. The meeting will include presentations from both schools, public comment, and votes on the renewals. The Chair will set the tone and facilitate the school presentations and public comment, and Jim Handy will move the motions for both renewal votes.

The Committee agreed that the renewal recommendations will not be included in the public meeting packet. Staff will send the Commission meeting packet, including a detailed map to the Fireside Lounge.

5. Staff Updates

Staff noted an upcoming full-day professional development session with Accelerate Education at Sable Oaks in Portland.

Votes taken:

- Approval of the September 1, 2026 minutes, as amended — moved by Jim Handy, seconded by Tom Keller; approved unanimously.

Adjournment: 1:47pm

Minutes prepared by: Amy Lynn Allen

Minutes approved:

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Coversheet

DRAFT SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report (and Annual Portfolio Summary)

Section:	IV. Agenda Items - For Discussion
Item:	A. DRAFT SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report (and Annual Portfolio Summary)
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	DRAFT SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report.pdf Portfolio_Summary_SY2025-26.docx

Annual Charter School Report

School Year 2025–26

OUR VISION

Innovative public charter schools will provide Maine students with an equitable opportunity for an excellent education where students are valued, supported, and challenged.

MAINE
CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Submitted to the Commissioner of Education and the Maine Legislature pursuant to 20-A MRSA §2405(4) · November 2026

November 2026

Commissioner Makin,

We are pleased to submit the SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report for your review and for the Legislature. This report fulfills our statutory obligation under 20-A MRSA §2405(4) to report on the performance of Maine's charter public schools and the Commission's work as their authorizer.

Maine's nine charter public schools served 2,834 students on October 1, 2025, a 4.3% increase over the prior year. 22.7% of those students were identified with disabilities and 46.0% were considered economically disadvantaged, both above the most recent statewide averages (20.3% and 45.8%). Demand continues to grow: waitlists reached 714 students.

Two findings stand out this year:

- **Strong results at a lower public cost.** Across the portfolio, 73% of rated Performance Framework outcomes met or exceeded expectations, up from 64% in SY2024-25. Every charter public high school met the state's graduation target and the Commission's college-readiness expectation. In FY25, the most recent year the Department of Education has published, charters spent an average of $13,195 per student, one-third less than the statewide average of $19,804.
- **Students coming back to public education.** At least 228 charter students came to their school from homeschooling or a private school. That is 8% of all charter enrollment, and about one in six new students this year.

Portfolio Strengths:

- High school graduation rates: all seven charter public high schools met or exceeded the state target, and Maine Virtual Academy graduated 100% of its seniors for the fifth consecutive year
- College readiness: all seven high schools met or exceeded Accuplacer expectations, and six exceeded them
- Reading proficiency in grade 10: five of seven high schools outperformed the state
- Family, teacher, and staff satisfaction, with family surveys meeting or exceeding expectations at eight of nine schools
- Turnarounds in student school climate, including grades 3–5 at ACADIA Academy and Community Regional Charter School, which rose from Not Meeting to Exceeding
- Board training: eight of nine governing boards completed 100% of required training, up from fewer than half last year
- Student persistence: eight of nine schools kept at least 90% of their students through the school year

Areas of Growth:

- Math proficiency on the Maine Through Year Assessment: only two of ten campuses met or exceeded expectations
- Reading and math in grades 4 through 6, where several elementary programs fell below the state
- Chronic absenteeism at five campuses, which remains above 30%
- Teacher and staff climate at two schools
- Timely posting of governing board agendas and approved minutes at three schools
- Long-term financial health as enrollment, facility, and health insurance costs rise

The Commission is made up of seven (7) seats, with six members currently serving and one vacancy: Brian Langley, Commission Chair; Tom Keller, Vice Chair; Vicky Cohen; James Ford; Jeremy Ray; and Jim Handy. Their work is supported by three staff members: myself; Amy Allen, Operations Director; and Sue Whipkey, Business Manager.

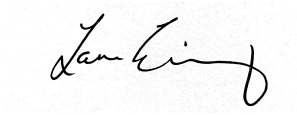
DRAFT

In October 2025, the Commission renewed the charters of ACADIA Academy and Maine Arts Academy for five-year terms, and during the year it conducted renewal reviews of Community Regional Charter School and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences. MOXIE Public Schools completed its pre-opening year. SY2025-26 was also the Commission's first full year as a body corporate and politic under LD 1718, and its first under a revised Performance Framework adopted on February 11, 2026.

Since the close of the fiscal year. MOXIE Public Schools opened its doors to students in fall 2026, bringing the portfolio to ten operating schools. On October 13, 2026, the Commission renewed the charters of Community Regional Charter School (with conditions) and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for five-year terms. Both will be reported in full in the SY2026-27 report.

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

Sincerely,



Lana M. Ewing
Executive Director

DRAFT

Highlights from the Portfolio

Nine charter public schools, 2,834 students, and one standout result from each school in SY2025-26.

ACADIA Academy

246 students · Grades PreK–6 · Lewiston

Kept chronic absenteeism to 5.75%, about one-fifth of the Androscoggin County rate. Third graders outperformed the state in reading (76%) and math (72%).

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

385 students · Grades 9–12 · Portland

Grade 10 students outperformed the state in science (59.3% vs. 38.3%) and math (57.7% vs. 49%). Students earned state and national recognition in cybersecurity, robotics, science, chess, and art.

Community Regional Charter School

373 students · Grades PreK–12 · Skowhegan and Cornville

Raised grade 3 reading proficiency at Dimensions Academy from 21% to 60%, and graduated 96% of its seniors.

Ecology Learning Center

131 students · Grades 9–12 · Unity

Every senior graduated and completed an internship, and 96% met a college-readiness benchmark. All four school climate surveys exceeded expectations.

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences

209 students · Grades PreK–8 · Gray

Doubled PreK to 46 students, exceeded expectations for reading growth, and met its chronic absenteeism target.

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

179 students · Grades 9–12 · Hinckley

Runs Threshold, a diploma program for students whose lives make regular attendance hard, including students who are pregnant or parenting, or facing physical or emotional challenges. Students work independently at home three days a week.

Maine Arts Academy

314 students · Grades 7–12 · Augusta

Opened its middle school and its first on-campus AP courses. 98% of seniors met the Accuplacer reading benchmark.

Maine Connections Academy

499 students · Grades 7–12 · Statewide (virtual)

Tested every eligible seventh and eighth grader in person, exceeded expectations for math growth, and kept chronic absenteeism to 9.26%.

Maine Virtual Academy

498 students · Grades 7–12 · Statewide (virtual)

Graduated all 112 seniors, a 100% four-year graduation rate for the fifth consecutive year.

SY2025-26 at a Glance

1. Performing well with fewer public dollars

Charter public schools receive less public money per student than traditional public schools, by design. Under 20-A MRSA §2413, each charter receives the EPS per-pupil operating allocation for its students, and "debt service and capital outlays may not be included." The Commission's authorizer fee is deducted from that allocation (2.45% in FY26). Charters must find and pay for their buildings out of that operating allocation.

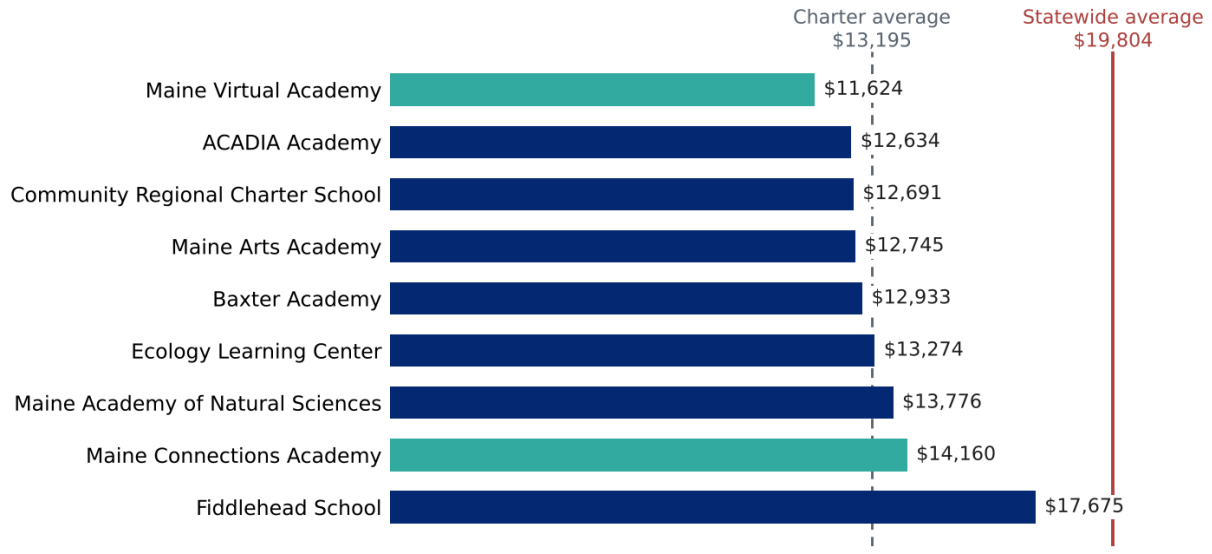
Districts, by contrast, can raise more than the EPS formula amount, and nearly all do. In FY25, 201 of the 216 districts that reported budget data raised more state and local operating funding than their EPS allocation. Together they budgeted 28.5% above EPS, about $645 million more, not counting debt service (Maine DOE, FY 2024-25 Over/Under EPS Report). Charter public schools have no local tax base to raise those additional dollars, and they receive no public funding for debt service or buildings.

Baxter Academy and Ecology Learning Center also educate students who are past the age of state subsidy, with no state funding for them.

On that funding, the portfolio met or exceeded expectations on 73% of rated Performance Framework outcomes, up from 64% the year before. All seven charter public high schools met the state's 88% graduation target, and five posted rates above 90%. All seven met or exceeded the college-readiness expectation on the Accuplacer, the benchmark the Maine Community College System uses for placement into credit-bearing courses.

The Department of Education's most recent per-pupil spending report, for FY25 (SY2024-25), shows the difference. Charter public schools spent an average of $13,195 per student, compared with a statewide average of $19,804, about one-third less. Every charter spent less than the state average. Even with debt service set aside, which charters largely do not carry, charters spent about 30% less ($13,124 compared with $18,792).

Charter public schools spent about one-third less per student than the state average



Source: Maine DOE, Resident Expenditures by Budget Category, FY 2024-25 (Per Pupil Amounts), Jan. 7, 2026. Charter average weighted by resident pupils. Teal = virtual charter schools.

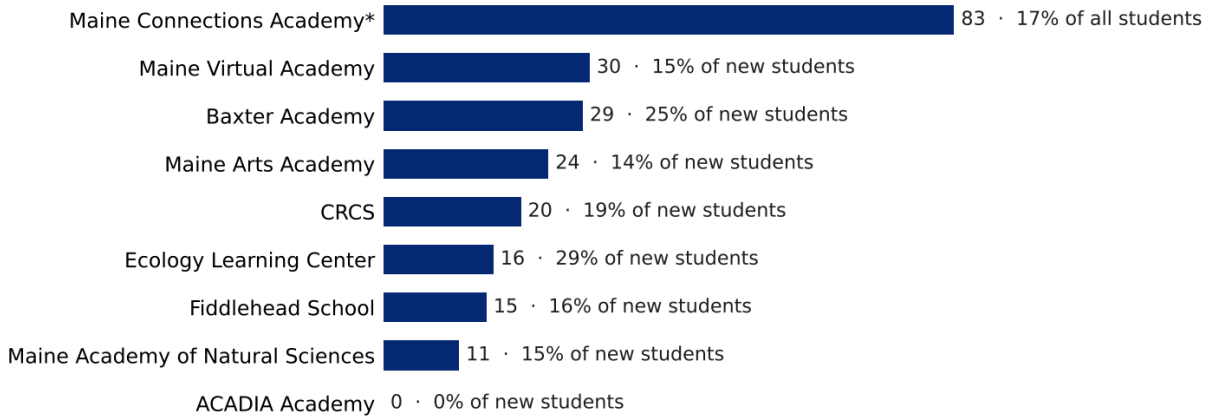
Per-pupil spending from all sources, FY 2024-25. These are the most recent figures the Department has published (released January 2026); FY 2025-26 figures are not yet available.

Taken together, the 2,546 charter students counted in FY25 were educated for about $16.8 million less than the same number of students would cost at the statewide average.

2. Students returning to public education

At least 228 of the 2,834 students enrolled in a charter public school on October 1, 2025 came from homeschooling or a private school. That is 8% of all charter enrollment. At eight schools, 145 of the 862 students who were new this year (17%) came from these settings. At Maine Connections Academy, which reports where every current student first enrolled from, the share was the same: 83 of 499 students (17%).

At least 228 of 2,834 charter students came from homeschooling or private school



Source: SY2025-26 draft AMRs, October 1, 2025 enrollment.
*MCA reports where all current students first enrolled from; the other schools report new students only.

The figure is a floor: at eight of the nine schools it counts only students who were new this year, not those who returned to public education in earlier years and are still enrolled.

Another 106 new students at ACADIA Academy, Community Regional Charter School, and Fiddlehead School were starting school for the first time.

Why families come back

Across the portfolio, school leaders describe the same reasons families give for leaving a traditional school setting: a child's anxiety, depression, or other physical or mental health needs; bullying, or a school where the child did not feel safe; and the search for a program that fits how the child learns. Many of these families had stepped outside the public system altogether to meet those needs, through homeschooling or a private school.

Families report that charter public schools give them a way back. Students return to a free public education, and with it to the same accountability as every other public school student: state assessments, the Commission's Performance Framework, and public reporting of results. For families who had run out of options inside the system, a charter public school is often the reason they came back in.

3. Virtual charter public schools and in-person state testing

Many families choose a virtual school because a traditional building has not worked for their child. Anxiety, depression, and other physical and mental health conditions are among the most common reasons, along with bullying, medical needs, and family circumstances. Around 35% of students who enroll in a virtual charter public school cite anxiety as their reason for choosing it. For these students, the virtual setting is not a convenience. It is what makes school possible.

State law requires students at virtual charter public schools to take state assessments "in a proctored setting" (20-A MRSA §2408(2)(D)(5)). In practice, this means testing in person at sites the schools arrange across the state. Maine Connections Academy and Maine Virtual Academy enroll students from 194 and 185 cities and towns, and families arrange their own travel to the test sites. For some students, testing in an unfamiliar building is a real challenge.

Both schools go to considerable lengths to make in-person testing work. In spring 2026, Maine Connections Academy tested students at 22 locations over 57 testing days, from Sanford to Presque Isle and Madawaska, at university campuses, community centers, and public libraries. Maine Virtual Academy averages seven testing locations each fall and spring session, with two to three testing days at each, and a travel team follows up with make-ups and one-on-one testing until the state window closes.

School	Communities served	Economically disadvantaged	In-person testing, spring 2026
Maine Connections Academy	194 cities and towns; 117 SAUs	50.1%	22 locations over 57 testing days, including make-ups
Maine Virtual Academy	185 cities and towns; 108 SAUs	50.2%	About 7 locations per session, 2–3 days each, plus a travel team for make-ups and one-on-one testing

An opportunity ahead. This is the last school year the Maine Through Year Assessment will be administered through NWEA; the Department of Education has contracted with a new vendor for the state assessment. The transition is a natural time to look at how students in virtual schools are assessed. The Commission shares the goal behind the proctoring requirement: valid, comparable results for every student. We would welcome the opportunity to join early conversations with the Department, the new vendor, and the virtual schools about options that keep that goal while easing the burden on students and families, such as remote proctoring where test security allows, testing sites closer to students' homes, or help with travel.

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A. Our Strategic Vision and Progress

SY2025-26 was the first full school year under the Commission's Strategic Plan 2025-2028, launched in January 2025. Our mission is "to authorize, monitor, and support innovative public charter schools that provide a dynamic, high-quality education for every student." Our vision 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."

Maine's charter public schools add to the range of options in public education, from virtual schools serving students in more than 180 cities and towns each to arts and STEAM academies in more populated areas. Demand continues to grow. Charter enrollment rose 4.3% this year to 2,834 students, and waitlists reached 714 students.

Our work is guided by six values: Excellence, Students First, Equity, Collaboration, Innovation, and Accountability.

Progress on the four strategic priorities

At the plan's halfway point, the Commission's September 2026 mid-plan reflection found the plan substantially on track. Priority 4 is largely complete, ahead of schedule. Priority 2 reached its defining milestone with the authorization and launch of a new school. Priorities 1 and 3 are on track and moving from activities to lasting systems.

Strategic priority	Status (mid-plan, 2026)	Where it stands
1. Encourage excellent, innovative schools	On track	Year-round professional learning for school leaders and boards; revised Performance Framework; Innovation Fund applications and awards increased
2. Authorize excellent new charter school(s)	On track; launch achieved	Maine's tenth charter public school authorized and through its pre-opening year, meeting every pre-opening goal
3. Good to great authorizing	On track	Renewal practice strengthened; policymaker engagement growing; national learning and Commission professional development continuing
4. Organizational excellence	Largely complete, ahead of schedule	Reclassification enacted; new financial, payroll, and IT systems in place; redundant staffing fee eliminated

Priority 1: Encourage excellent, innovative schools

- Revised the Performance Framework, approved February 11, 2026, and adapted it to set Year 1 expectations for a brand-new school.
- Held six board professional development sessions, three times the plan's semi-annual goal. Eight of nine schools attended at least one, and an average of six schools attended each session.
- Ran monthly School Leader Meetings throughout the year.
- Built communications capacity across the network: four communications sessions, a March 10 board session attended by seven of nine boards, and school-specific consulting for five schools.
- Awarded $32,070 in Innovation Fund grants to four schools: Baxter Academy ($10,000), MOXIE Public Schools ($9,320), Fiddlehead School ($8,000), and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences ($4,750). More schools applied and received awards than the year before.
- Maine Arts Academy opened grades 7 and 8 under a charter amendment approved on the plan's criteria of demand, innovation, and performance.

- Analyzed NWEA MAP Growth against the Maine Through Year Assessment, leading to a proposal to make MAP Growth optional while keeping growth reporting through state assessment data, which would reduce testing for schools.

Priority 2: Authorize excellent new charter school(s)

- Guided MOXIE Public Schools, Maine's tenth charter public school, through a pre-opening year in which it met every pre-opening goal: all Department of Education requirements fulfilled; $1,171,000 raised against a $1,000,000 goal; 115 students enrolled against a target of 108; all 11 staff positions filled; and a facility acquired and renovated.
- Worked with MOXIE through a shared Pre-Opening Tracker and set Year 1 Performance Framework targets with the school's input.
- Built a first-year oversight schedule of site visits, data checkpoints, and board touchpoints, to be documented as a model for future new schools.

Priority 3: Good to great authorizing

- Strengthened renewal practice for the CRCS and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences reviews by adding an external expert reviewer, an independent third-party evaluation of CRCS, site visits, focus groups, public hearings, and complete evidence packets.
- Engaged policymakers: a majority of charter public schools hosted visits from policymakers during the year.
- Continued national learning through the NACSA annual conference and twice-yearly Commission professional development.
- Adopted or updated governance policies on conflicts of interest, records retention, reserve fund investment, and insurance and risk management, and refreshed onboarding materials for new Commission members.

Priority 4: Organizational excellence

- Completed the plan's central action: legislation reclassifying the Commission as a body corporate and politic and a public instrumentality of the State took effect in September 2025.
- Put core systems in place under the new structure: an interest-bearing account with Bangor Savings, payroll through Bangor Payroll, and managed IT on new hardware and software.
- Eliminated the redundant fee named in the plan by ending the temporary staffing agency arrangement for full-time staff.
- Launched a new Commission website.

Looking ahead. The second half of the plan turns on a few proof points: MOXIE's Year 1 results, a clean first independent audit of the Commission (FY26, under way this fall), renewal decisions for Baxter Academy and Fiddlehead School in October 2027, and continuing policymaker engagement.

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B. Performance of Operating Charter Public Schools

Across the portfolio, 73% of rated Performance Framework outcomes met or exceeded expectations in SY2025-26, up from 64% in SY2024-25. Looking only at the 128 outcomes rated in both years, 18 moved up to Meeting or Exceeding and 5 fell below it. Results are strongest in graduation, college readiness, school climate, and governance compliance. Math proficiency and chronic absenteeism are the clearest areas for improvement. Statute requires campus-level reporting for Community Regional Charter School, so its Dimensions and Overman campuses are shown separately.

SY2025-26 Performance Framework Outcomes:

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting

Measure	ACADIA	Baxter	CRCS Dim.	CRCS Ovr.	ELC	FSAS	MeANS	MeAA	MCA	MeVA
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT										
Reading proficiency (MTY)										
Math proficiency (MTY)										
Reading growth (NWEA, gr 3–8)		—			—		—			
Math growth (NWEA, gr 3–8)		—			—		—			
4-year graduation rate	—		—			—				
College readiness (Accuplacer)	—		—			—				
College & career readiness activity	—		—			—				
Chronic absenteeism										
SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT										
Family survey										
Student survey (grades 3–5)		—		—	—		—	—	—	—
Student survey (grades 6–12)			—							
Teacher survey										
Staff survey										
ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY										
Board meetings & timely posting										
Reporting on time & accurate										
Board training										
SCHOOL MISSION AND STUDENT PERSISTENCE										
Student persistence (school year)										

— = measure does not apply. ACADIA's grades 6–12 student survey covers grade 6 only. Family, governance, reporting, and persistence results for CRCS are district-wide and appear under both campuses. Creative Children's Academy (CRCS PreK–K) does not take state assessments, and its chronic absenteeism (36%) is not rated. Financial risk ratings are shown separately in Section 4. SY2024-25 comparisons use the prior-year ratings reported in each school's SY2025-26 AMR, on the same measures; outcomes not rated last year (such as chronic absenteeism at several schools, and MeAA's new middle-school growth measures) are left out of the prior-year rate.

SECTION 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Academic Achievement – Proficiency

Maine's charter public schools administer the Maine Through Year Assessment to measure reading and math proficiency in grades 3–8 and 10. To meet the Commission's target, a school's share of students at or above expectations must be within 5 points of the state average.

Reading is a strength. Six of ten campuses met or exceeded expectations, and five of seven high schools outperformed the state in grade 10. Maine Arts Academy (74.6% vs. 62% statewide) and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (74%, up from 35%) led the portfolio.

Math remains the portfolio's most significant academic challenge. Only Baxter Academy (57.7% vs. 49%) met or exceeded expectations, and four campuses were Not Meeting. Results were weakest in grades 4 through 6 at the elementary schools and in grades 7 and 8 at schools whose middle-school students were new this year. Several schools note that many new students arrive below grade level. Most have new math plans in place for SY2026-27, including partnerships with the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance at Baxter Academy and Maine Connections Academy.

Academic Achievement – Growth

Schools serving grades 3–8 administer NWEA MAP to measure growth. To meet expectations, 45–55% of students must meet their projected growth from fall to spring. Reading growth was solid: five of seven programs met or exceeded expectations, with Fiddlehead School (65.4%) and CRCS–Dimensions Academy (56%) exceeding. Math growth was mixed: four of seven met or exceeded, led by Maine Connections Academy (56%). The revised Framework no longer includes NWEA Language Usage.

High School Graduation

Graduation rates continue to be a strength. All seven charter public high schools met or exceeded the state's 2026 target of 88%. Maine Virtual Academy graduated 100% of its seniors for the fifth consecutive year, and Ecology Learning Center graduated all 28 seniors. The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences raised its rate to 88%. Most 5- and 6-year cohorts fell below the 10-student reporting minimum this year. Maine Connections Academy's were large enough to report, and both exceeded the target (90.62% and 93.08%).

Post-Secondary Readiness

The Commission expects 75–85% of students to meet the Accuplacer college-readiness benchmark (239 in reading or 226 in math). All seven high schools met or exceeded that expectation, and six exceeded it, led by Maine Arts Academy (98% reading, 95% math). Six of seven also met or exceeded the goal that 70–80% of graduates complete at least one post-secondary activity, such as a college course, AP course, certificate program, career and technical coursework, or internship. Ecology Learning Center students earned 78 college credits through dual enrollment, saving an estimated $23,166 in tuition.

Student Attendance

The revised Performance Framework expects schools to "demonstrate lower chronic absenteeism than the state average." Because the Maine Department of Education publishes statewide attendance data about a year after each school year ends, SY2025-26 school results can be compared only with the most recent published state rate: 23.4%, for SY2024-25. The SY2025-26 attendance ratings are therefore provisional. The Commission will confirm them against the SY2025-26 state rate once it is released and report the final comparison in next year's report.

Against the most recent state rate, four of ten campuses had lower chronic absenteeism in SY2025-26, and five were above 30%. Rates ranged from 5.75% to 39%. Now that final state data is published for SY2024-25, the like-for-like comparison for that year is also available: five of ten campuses had lower rates than the state that year.

SECTION 2: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Each spring, schools administer the Panorama School Climate survey to families, students, teachers, and staff. The Commission expects results at or above the 50th percentile compared with similar schools nationally.

Family satisfaction remains strong: eight of nine schools met or exceeded expectations. The biggest change came from younger students. Last year we reported that grades 3–5 results were historically low. This year, grades 3–5 results at ACADIA Academy and CRCS–Dimensions Academy rose from Not Meeting to Exceeding, with School Climate reaching the 90th percentile at both. CRCS credits a project that explained survey questions to younger learners in kid-friendly terms. Baxter Academy and Fiddlehead School's grades 6–8 students also moved from Not Meeting to Exceeding.

Three results need attention. Grades 3–5 at Fiddlehead School remain Not Meeting. The Maine Arts Academy student survey did not meet expectations for a fourth year, and its family results fell from Exceeding to Approaching during the transition to a middle school. Teacher and staff results at ACADIA Academy, and teacher results at Fiddlehead School, remain Not Meeting.

SECTION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Board Training

Board training improved more than any other measure. Eight of nine governing boards completed 100% of required governance training, up from fewer than half last year. Fiddlehead School's board reached 86%, up from 26%. Maine Connections Academy (13% to 100%) and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (11% to 100%) made the largest gains.

Public Accountability

Agendas must be posted 5 business days before each board meeting, and approved minutes within 5 business days after. Six of nine boards met or exceeded the requirement. Maine Arts Academy and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences resolved last year's concerns. ACADIA Academy (5 late) and Fiddlehead School (9 late) remain Not Meeting.

Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness

Schools submit required documents through Epicenter, with a goal of 80–90% on time and accurate. Of the 645 required submissions in SY2025-26, 94% were submitted on time, up from 88% of 403 submissions last year. Eight of nine schools met or exceeded the goal, and four reported 100%. ACADIA Academy improved from 67% to 76% on time (Approaching).

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND VIABILITY

Financial oversight is among the most important work an authorizer does. Nationally, financial problems are the most common reason charter public schools close: 42% of closures, compared with 19% for academic performance, with mismanagement accounting for another 24% (Center for Education Reform, 2011). Close financial monitoring is how an authorizer spots trouble early, while there is still time to correct it.

The Commission reviewed all four quarters of financials for all nine schools in SY2025-26, along with each school's FY25 annual audited financial statements, and rates each school on the Performance Framework's eight financial measures. Four measures look at near-term health and four at long-term sustainability. Each is rated Low, Moderate, or High Risk.

Maine's charter public schools are meeting their financial obligations. Based on FY26 fourth-quarter financials, no school is in default on any obligation, and all nine are Low Risk on debt to assets. Maine Virtual Academy was Low Risk on all eight measures and Maine Connections Academy on seven. Baxter Academy and Maine Arts Academy had no High Risk ratings.

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk

Measure (FY26 Q4)	ACADIA	Baxter	CRCS	ELC	FSAS	MeANS	MeAA	MCA	MeVA
NEAR-TERM									
Current ratio									
Days cash on hand									
Enrollment variance									
Financial obligations default									
SUSTAINABILITY									
Three-year aggregated margin									
Debt to assets									
Two-year cash flow									
Obligation coverage ratio									

Source: FY26 fourth-quarter financials reviewed by Commission staff. The Commission will review these ratings against each school's audited financial statements when they become available and will note any changes in next year's report.

Long-term margins are the most common concern. Four schools were High Risk on three-year aggregated margin: ACADIA Academy, Ecology Learning Center, Fiddlehead School, and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences. For the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, the result reflects a planned deficit budget in FY26, funded from its FY25 surplus while it rebuilds enrollment. Ecology Learning Center ran deficits in two of the last three years. Community Regional Charter School, historically one of the strongest in the portfolio financially, was High Risk on enrollment variance after the first enrollment decline in its history.

ACADIA Academy's results need the closest attention. Half of its measures were High Risk, including days cash on hand, three-year margin, two-year cash flow, and obligation coverage. The Commission will continue to monitor ACADIA's finances closely. It will also monitor Fiddlehead School, whose Level 1 Intervention plan includes financial oversight, as both schools carry out the savings and revenue steps described in their AMRs.

Pressures are common across the portfolio: health insurance increases of 8–12%, aging facilities (including a $500,000 roof repair at CRCS–Dimensions Academy), transportation, and enrollment softness at three schools. Several schools are pursuing savings through Maine School Boards Association insurance programs, renegotiated contracts, and stronger fundraising.

SECTION 5: SCHOOL MISSION AND STUDENT PERSISTENCE

The Commission expects at least 90% of students to persist through the school year. Eight of nine schools met or exceeded it, with rates from 90.4% to 94.5%. Community Regional Charter School was Approaching at 78.8%; the school did not report the measure, so the Commission calculated it from state enrollment records. Year-to-year persistence will be confirmed after the October 1, 2026 count.

All schools continue to implement the key design elements in their charters, from ACADIA's Universal Groups and Baxter's Flex Friday to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Natural Science Intensives, which three other Maine schools are now piloting.

SECTION 6: SCHOOL CUSTOMIZATION

Each school measures progress on goals tied to its own mission.

- **ACADIA Academy:** 61% of students had BARR individual goals in the school's third and final year with a BARR coach; K–2 writing growth results are pending.
- **Baxter Academy:** narrowed the PSAT 10 gap with the state from 43 points to 27, and matched the state on the SAT 11 (1032 vs. 1030).
- **Community Regional Charter School:** 77% of Dimensions students and 62% of Overman students met NWEA reading growth within one standard error.
- **Ecology Learning Center:** 70% of students scored 80–100% on winter Passion Projects, above the 65% threshold.
- **Fiddlehead School:** documented classroom standards and a balanced assessment system; customized targets will be revisited.
- **Maine Academy of Natural Sciences:** 89% earned credit in at least three Natural Science Intensives, and campus graduation reached 100%.
- **Maine Arts Academy:** 100% of graduates shared their art with the community at least twice, and 97.3% met performance proficiency.
- **Maine Connections Academy:** 83% of students took part in at least one in-person activity, field trip, or club.
- **Maine Virtual Academy:** median NWEA growth rose in reading and language usage but fell in math; a math curriculum review begins this year.

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C. Status of the Portfolio

As of June 30, 2026, the Commission's portfolio held ten approved charters: nine operating schools and one approved but not yet open. No charter was transferred, terminated, or closed during SY2025-26, and every approved school has opened or is on track to open.

Statutory status	School	Detail
Approved, not yet open	MOXIE Public Schools	Approved May 13, 2025; pre-opening year in SY2025-26; opened in fall 2026
Operating	ACADIA Academy	Originally opened in 2016
Operating	Baxter Academy for Technology and Science	Originally opened in 2013
Operating	Community Regional Charter School	Originally opened in 2012
Operating	Ecology Learning Center	Originally opened in 2020
Operating	Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences	Originally opened in 2013
Operating	Maine Academy of Natural Sciences	Originally opened in 2012
Operating	Maine Arts Academy	Originally opened in 2016
Operating	Maine Connections Academy	Originally opened in 2014
Operating	Maine Virtual Academy	Originally opened in 2015
Renewed	ACADIA Academy	Renewed in October 2025 for a five-year term
Renewed	Maine Arts Academy	Renewed in October 2025 for a five-year term
Transferred	*None*	
Terminated	*None*	
Closed	*None*	
Never opened	*None*	

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D. Oversight and Services Provided to Charter Public Schools

The Commission oversees schools through the Performance Framework, site visits, and year-round reporting, and it funds shared platforms that every school uses. Its oversight rests on a simple bargain: schools get autonomy over how they reach agreed-upon goals and are held accountable for results, not inputs.

Oversight in SY2025-26

Activity	Purpose	SY2025-26
Performance Framework revision	Keep measures clear, rigorous, and aligned with state assessments	Revised Framework adopted February 11, 2026. Key changes: chronic absenteeism now measured against the state average; new targets for the percentage of third graders reading at grade level; NWEA Language Usage removed; Accuplacer subgroup rating revised
Annual Monitoring Reports	Report each school's Performance Framework outcomes, with a factual-accuracy review by the school	9 reports, including campus-level results for CRCS; drafts to schools October 14, 2026
End-of-year meetings	Review self-assessments and outcomes with each school's leaders and board	9 schools
Monitoring site visits	Gather evidence on progress toward mission and contract goals, following the Site Visit Manual	8 of 9 schools visited; Maine Connections Academy was in a document-review-only year under the Site Visit Manual
Mid-year check-ins	Meet with each school's administrative team and board chair on progress toward end-of-year criteria	All 9 schools
Renewals	Renewal application, site visit, public hearing, and decision	ACADIA Academy and Maine Arts Academy renewed October 2025. CRCS and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences reviews conducted in 2026, adding an external expert reviewer, an independent evaluation of CRCS, site visits, focus groups, public hearings, and full evidence packets
Interventions	Notices of concern, intervention plans, or conditions	Fiddlehead School placed on Level 1 Intervention in December 2025 (chronic absenteeism, school climate, and financial reporting and oversight), with goals due by the end of SY2026-27; after year one, progress made but not all goals yet met. Community Regional Charter School was designated Level 2 Intervention in January 2026, formalizing a two-year improvement plan (student achievement, chronic absenteeism, and student persistence); the plan closed at the end of SY2025-26, and remaining

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Activity	Purpose	SY2025-26
		goals carry forward through the school's renewal
Pre-opening oversight	Track Ready-to-Open milestones for a new school	MOXIE Public Schools met every pre-opening goal, tracked through a shared Pre-Opening Tracker; Year 1 Performance Framework targets set with the school; pre-opening walk-through of the school conducted in August 2026
Financial review	Track near-term and sustainability risk and catch problems early	All four quarters of financials reviewed for all 9 schools, along with each school's FY25 annual audited financial statements. Each year, once audited financials are reconciled against fourth-quarter results, the Commission issues an addendum to the financial metrics if any ratings change.
Requests and amendments	Review financing requests, charter amendments, and changes to governing documents	Four requests reviewed: Maine Arts Academy's revised mission statement; Maine Academy of Natural Sciences bylaw amendments; ACADIA Academy's request for a line of credit; and CRCS's request to finance kitchen equipment

Services to support excellent performance

- **Panorama Education** (since 2016): spring school climate surveys of families, students, teachers, and staff, benchmarked against similar schools nationally. Schools also have access to Panorama's optional Social Emotional Learning surveys, which no school used in SY2025-26. The Commission is funding a pilot of Panorama's Student Success Platform at the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.
- **NWEA MAP Growth**: the fall and spring growth assessment the Commission requires for grades 3–8, funded by the Commission.
- **Infinite Campus**: a student information system available to every charter through the Commission's contract. Five schools used it through the Commission in SY2025-26, and two more use it under their own contracts.
- **Epicenter**: the compliance, governance, and reporting platform (since fall 2016). It also hosts the renewal and new school applications through EdLusion.
- **Lotterease** (since 2020): an enrollment and lottery platform that helps schools follow the enrollment requirements of 20-A MRSA §2404.
- **BoardOnTrack**: governance tools and coaching for charter boards.
- **Professional learning and networking**: monthly School Leader Meetings all year; six board professional development sessions, attended by eight of nine schools; four communications sessions with school-specific consulting for five schools; and $32,070 in Innovation Fund grants to four schools.

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E. Funds Collected and Oversight Costs

State law allows the Commission to retain up to 3% of the annual per-pupil allocation received by each charter public school it authorizes (20-A MRSA §2405(5)(B)). In FY26 the Commission retained 2.45%, the same rate as FY25.

Funds collected from each school

School	Enrollment (Oct. 1, 2025)	Fees collected (FY26)
ACADIA Academy	246	$80,912.97
Baxter Academy for Technology and Science	385	$126,829.99
Community Regional Charter School	373	$123,673.34
Ecology Learning Center	131	$38,800.55
Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences	209	$64,542.55
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences	179	$58,876.12
Maine Arts Academy	314	$99,501.73
Maine Connections Academy	499	$149,629.11
Maine Virtual Academy	498	$138,313.47
Total	**2,834**	**$881,079.83**

Costs of oversight

Based on the FY26 ED279s, the Commission's revenue was $887,264: the $881,079.83 in fees collected from schools, plus $6,184 in interest earned on the Commission's bank account. The Commission spent $875,295 on monitoring performance and supporting the success of Maine's charter public schools, leaving a balance of $11,969 that was carried over to FY27.

The Commission's oversight costs are shared across the portfolio rather than incurred school by school. Staff time, site visits, renewal reviews, and the platforms every school uses (Epicenter, Panorama, Infinite Campus, Lotterease, BoardOnTrack, and NWEA MAP) serve all schools at once, so they are reported for the portfolio as a whole, using the categories in the Commission's annual budget.

FY26 expenditures	Amount
Commission operations (staff, Commission meetings, monitoring and renewals, travel, professional development, legal, and other operating costs)	$688,891
School-provided services (platforms and services the Commission provides to schools, such as Epicenter, Panorama, Infinite Campus, Lotterease, BoardOnTrack, and NWEA MAP)	$171,404
Contingency (used to fund the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences pilot of Panorama's Student Success Platform)	$15,000
Total FY26 expenditures	**$875,295**

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Charter School Portfolio Summary — SY2025-26

Prepared for the Executive Committee · October 28, 2026 · Based on draft SY2025-26 Annual Monitoring Reports

Overview

The nine schools enrolled 2,834 students on October 1, 2025, up 117 from the prior year. Graduation, college readiness and board governance were strong; math proficiency and chronic absenteeism were the most widespread concerns. ACADIA, Fiddlehead (Level 1 Intervention) and Community Regional (renewed with conditions) warrant the closest attention.

Cross-portfolio themes

Strengths

- **Graduation:** all seven schools with seniors met the 88% state target; ELC and MeVA reached 100%.
- **College readiness:** every high school met or exceeded the Accuplacer target.
- **Governance:** eight of nine boards completed 100% of required training.
- **Reading:** six schools were Meeting or Exceeding; MeANS and MeVA moved up from Not Meeting.

Areas of Focus

- **Math:** eight of nine schools were below the state, and three were Not Meeting.
- **Chronic absenteeism:** four schools were Not Meeting, with rates of 31–39%.
- **Climate:** teacher surveys were Not Meeting at two schools, and one school's student survey missed for a fourth year.
- **Finances and leadership:** five schools had a High Risk financial measure, and four lack a formal succession plan.

Portfolio at a glance

Shading: blue = Exceeding, green = Meeting, yellow = Approaching, red = Not Meeting. Financial ratings use fourth-quarter financials.

School	Grades · enrollment	Reading proficiency	Math proficiency	Chronic absenteeism	4-yr graduation	Climate surveys at Meeting or above	High Risk financial measures
ACADIA Academy	PreK–6 · 246	47.3% · Not Meeting (down from Meeting)	29.0% · Not Meeting	5.75% · Exceeding	—	2 of 5	4 of 8
Baxter Academy	9–12 · 385	59.2% · Meeting (down from Exceeding)	57.7% · Exceeding	30.7% · Not Meeting	93.4% · Exceeding	4 of 4	0
Community Regional (CRCS)	PreK–12 · 373	Dimensions 49% · Approaching; Overman 46% · Not Meeting	Dimensions 23% · Not Meeting; Overman 25% · Not Meeting	33% district-wide; Overman 39% · Not Meeting	96% · Exceeding	All reported	1 of 8
Ecology Learning Center	9–12 · 131	65% · Meeting	38% · Approaching	24% · Approaching	100% · Exceeding	4 of 4	1 of 8
Fiddlehead (FSAS)	PreK–8 · 209	65% · Meeting	42% · Approaching	31.9% · Not Meeting	—	3 of 5	2 of 8
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences	9–12 · 179	74% · Exceeding (up from Not Meeting)	41% · Approaching (up from Not Meeting)	37% · Not Meeting	88% · Meeting	4 of 4	1 of 8
Maine Arts Academy	7–12 · 314	69.4% · Meeting (down from Exceeding)	26.3% · Not Meeting (down from Approaching)	23.1% · Meeting	92.3% · Exceeding	2 of 4	0
Maine Connections Academy (virtual)	7–12 · 499	63.4% · Meeting	32.8% · Approaching	9.26% · Exceeding	89.7% (est.) · Exceeding	4 of 4	0
Maine Virtual Academy	7–12 · 498	55% · Approaching (up from Not Meeting)	31.7% · Approaching	7.51% · Exceeding	100% · Exceeding	4 of 4	0

School briefs by attention level

Attention levels are a suggested grouping for discussion, not a Commission rating.

Closest attention

ACADIA Academy (Lewiston, PreK–6, 246 students)

Reading fell to Not Meeting and math stayed Not Meeting, with grades 4–6 far below the state (7% in grade 4 math). Teacher and staff climate were Not Meeting again, 4 of 8 financial measures were High Risk, and there is no succession plan. Grade 3 results and 5.75% absenteeism were bright spots.

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (Gray, PreK–8, 209 students)

In its first year of Level 1 Intervention, FSAS met its absenteeism target (31.9%, down from 47.6%) and its grades 6–8 climate goal. Teacher and grades 3–5 climate did not improve, two financial measures remain High Risk, and 9 board postings were late.

Community Regional Charter School (Skowhegan/Cornville, PreK–12, 373 students)

Renewed with conditions on October 13, 2026. Graduation (96%) and reading growth are strong, but math is Not Meeting at both campuses, persistence was 78.8%, and Overman absenteeism reached 39%. Declining enrollment and a $500,000 roof repair add pressure.

Monitor

Maine Arts Academy (Augusta, 7–12, 314 students)

Grew to 314 students with strong graduation (92.3%) and reading, but math fell to Not Meeting and climate results declined for every group. A new principal starts in SY2026-27.

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (Portland, 9–12, 385 students)

Leads the portfolio in math (57.7%) with 93.4% graduation and sound finances. Chronic absenteeism rose for a second year to 30.7%, and a new school leader is onboarding.

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Hinckley, 9–12, 179 students)

Renewed without conditions after the portfolio's largest gains: reading 35% to 74%, math 17% to 41%, graduation 65% to 88%. Chronic absenteeism (37%) is the main concern.

Routine oversight

Ecology Learning Center (Unity, 9–12, 131 students)

100% graduation, reading above the state and all climate surveys Exceeding. Math is Approaching, absenteeism rose to 24%, and Three-Year Aggregated Margin is High Risk.

Maine Connections Academy (virtual, 7–12, 499 students)

Low absenteeism (9.26%), strong math growth, all climate surveys Exceeding and sound finances. Math proficiency remains below the state, with a new 18-point gender gap.

Maine Virtual Academy (virtual, 7–12, 498 students)

100% graduation for a fifth year, 7.51% absenteeism and Low Risk on all financial measures. Reading rose to Approaching; male students were Not Meeting in both subjects.

Coversheet

MCSC SY2026-27 Legislative Engagement

Section: IV. Agenda Items - For Discussion
Item: B. MCSC SY2026-27 Legislative Engagement
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: MCSC_Legislative_Engagement_SY2026-27.docx.pdf

SY 2026–2027 · DRAFT PRIORITY 2: POLICYMAKER ENGAGEMENT

Legislative Engagement

2027 Maine Legislative Session

Maine Charter School Commission · Draft for Commission discussion · October 2026

WHY THIS DOCUMENT

The Commission has said it needs to be more purposeful and explicit about its role with state policymakers. This year we will define that role through practice rather than in the abstract.

This document sets a defined list of what the Commission will do during the 133rd Legislature's first regular session (December 2026 – June 2027) and names the things it will not do. We will try out these actions, reflect in June 2027 on whether it felt like the right level of engagement, and set more refined guardrails for SY 2027–2028 with that experience in hand.

The Commission's posture for this session

The Commission engages as the State's charter school authorizer — the body that knows the statute, the schools, and the data. It engages to inform, to answer, and to protect its ability to do its statutory job. It does not act as an advocacy organization for charter schools, and it does not speak for individual schools.

HOW WE DECIDE OUR ROLE ON ANY BILL

Each bill with a charter public school connection is assigned one of five levels of engagement. The level is the decision; the activities follow from it.

LEVEL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHO DECIDES
0 · Monitor	Track the bill. No action unless it changes.	Staff
1 · Inform	Answer legislator or committee questions, supply data, offer a factual briefing. No position taken.	Executive Director; reported to Executive Committee
2 · Testify, neither for nor against	Written or in-person testimony that explains how the bill would work in practice — effect on authorizing, oversight, schools, students, and timelines. No position taken.	Executive Committee

LEVEL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHO DECIDES
3 · Take a position	Testify in support or opposition. Reserved for bills that directly change the Commission's statutory authority, its oversight or renewal duties, its operations or funding, or the charter funding mechanism.	Executive Committee recommends; full Commission votes in a public meeting
4 · Propose	The Commission seeks a sponsor for its own statutory or rule change, drawn from the approved legislative agenda.	Full Commission vote; counsel review first

Screening questions

Staff will bring each bill to the Executive Committee with a recommended level and short answers to these questions:

- Does the bill amend the charter school law (Title 20-A, chapter 112) or the Commission's rules?
- Does it change what the Commission is required or permitted to do as authorizer?
- Does it change how charter public schools are funded, enrolled, staffed, or held accountable?
- Does the Commission hold facts, data, or implementation experience the committee would not otherwise have?
- Is there likely to be a majority vote among Commissioners? If not, the ceiling is Level 2.

A "no" to the first three questions generally means Level 0 or 1, regardless of how much the Commission may care about the topic.

WHAT WE WILL DO

The list below is the Commission's full legislative and policymaker engagement plan for SY 2026–2027. Items are drawn from the draft SY 2026–2027 priorities and sequenced against the legislative calendar. Dates are approximate and will be confirmed against the Legislature's published schedule.

ACTIVITY	WHEN	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Adopt the engagement framework	November 2026	Executive Director drafts the framework above; Executive Committee gives feedback and final approval. Shared with the full Commission at its next meeting.
Identify policy priorities	November – December 2026	A short, prioritized list of statutory and rule changes the Commission would support or put forward, vetted with counsel and approved by the Commission before the bill-submission deadline (cloture, early January). This is where we decide whether we put forward any bill of our own this session.

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ACTIVITY	WHEN	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Identify stakeholders	December 2026	After the November election: identify priority policymakers — Education and Cultural Affairs Committee members, leadership, legislators whose districts send the most students to charter public schools, and the Governor's education staff.
Update the district-representation document	December 2026	Refresh the document showing each school, the legislators who represent its students, and how many students come from each district. Reissued to schools and used for the school-visit asks.
Brief the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee	January 2027	Request an informational briefing early in session: who the Commission is, what it oversees, current performance, and the renewal calendar. Invite committee members to visit schools. This briefing is required statutorily.
Share educational materials with priority policymakers	January – February 2027	A factual charter public school packet (what they are, who attends, how they are funded and held accountable). Find a legislative sponsor to distribute it, starting with the priority list rather than all 186 members.
Hall of Flags day	January 25, 2027	Schools present in the Hall of Flags; Commissioners and staff attend. Timed early in session.
Monitor legislation	January – May 2027 (ongoing)	Staff reviews every bill with a charter connection and brings it to each Executive Committee meeting with a recommended level designation. Level 3 and 4 decisions go to the full Commission.
Provide testimony	February – April 2027 (public hearings)	Deliver and distribute in-person and written testimony. Determine other next steps related to testimony, as appropriate.
Every school hosts policymaker visits	October 2026 – May 2027	Schools aim to host at least one legislator who represents the school's students. Schools share visits conducted with the Commission staff.
Reflect and reset guardrails	June 2027	After adjournment, the Commission reviews what was done at each level, how it felt, and what it accomplished, then adopts refined guardrails for SY 2027–2028.

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WHAT WE WILL NOT DO

Naming the activities above is also a way of naming the edges. The Commission will not:

- **Take positions on bills outside its authorizing role.** General education policy, budget items that do not touch charter funding or the Commission, and other topics stay at Level 0 or 1 no matter how interesting they are.
- **Advocate for an individual school's interests.** A school's funding request, facility need, or dispute is the school's to carry, with its board and the Maine Alliance of Charter Schools. The Commission may supply facts; it does not carry the ask.
- **Coordinate advocacy.** No action alerts, no mobilizing families to contact legislators, no coordinated letter-writing, no op-eds or media campaigns on pending bills. Our public record on a bill is our testimony.
- **Let any one person speak for the Commission.** Staff do not take a position without Executive Committee direction. Commissioners may speak as individuals, but a Commission position exists only after a public vote.
- **Put forward bills that did not go through the agenda process.** If it is not on the approved legislative agenda, the Commission does not sponsor it this session.
- **Pre-commit beyond this session.** This plan is in effect for the 2027 legislative session. It is not a permanent definition of the Commission's role. The June 2027 reflection decides what carries forward.

WHO DOES WHAT

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Full Commission	Approves the legislative agenda. Votes on any Level 3 position and any Level 4 proposal. Receives a legislative update at each regular meeting. Conducts the June reflection.
Executive Committee	Approves the framework. Reviews screened bills at each meeting and sets the level. Authorizes Level 2 testimony. Recommends Level 3 and 4 items to the full Commission.
Chair	Primary Commission voice at Level 3. Signs Commission testimony and correspondence to the Legislature.
Executive Director and staff	Screen bills, draft testimony, answer policymaker questions (Level 1), maintain the target list and district document, and coordinate school visits (school coordinates details) and the Hall of Flags day.
Counsel	Reviews the legislative agenda and any proposed bill language before Commission approval.
School leaders and boards	Host policymaker visits. Testify from their own experience when invited. Carry their own schools' advocacy.

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SESSION CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

133rd Maine Legislature, first regular session. Legislative dates are approximate and will be confirmed when the Legislature publishes its calendar.

Oct – Nov 2026	Election Nov 3. Framework drafted and approved. Legislative agenda drafted and vetted with counsel. School visits under way.
Dec 2026	New Legislature sworn in and convenes (early Dec). Commission approves legislative agenda. Target list and district document updated. Sponsor secured for any Commission bill.
Jan 2027	Cloture (bill submission deadline, early Jan). Committee assignments announced. ECA Committee briefing requested. Hall of Flags day. Educational packet distributed. Bill screening begins.
Feb – Apr 2027	Public hearings and work sessions. Testimony delivered by level. School visits continue during recess weeks.
May – Jun 2027	Floor action and adjournment (statutory adjournment mid-June). Final tally of school visits. June reflection and SY 2027–2028 guardrails.

For Commission discussion

1. Does the five-level framework draw the line in the right place, and is Level 3 reserved narrowly enough?
2. Is the "will not do" list complete? Is anything on it something a member believes the Commission should do?
3. Does the Commission want to put forward any bill of its own this session? If so, it needs to be on the agenda before cloture.

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