

2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report

*Prepared for
Maine Connections Academy*

November 2023





Mission

The mission of Maine Connections Academy (MCA) is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program in grades 7-12 throughout the state of Maine for students who need an alternative to the traditional classroom.

Vision

The vision of MCA will be to reach students for whom a cutting-edge virtual approach provides the very best pathway to school success through a uniquely individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with very real connections among students, family, teachers, and the community to promote academic and emotional success for every learner.

Governing Board

Billy Thompson, President/Secretary	Jennifer Cummings, Treasurer
Ellen McBride	Connie Ronco
Jana Lapoint	

Leadership Team

Walter Wallace, Head of School	Lauren Thompson, Assist Principal
Joy Kiely, SPED Director	Amy Trunnell, Chief Financial Officer

School Profile

Year Opened	2014-15
Years in Operation	9
Grades Served	7-12
Number of Sending Districts	118
Enrollment*	466
Students on Waiting List*	93

*On 10-1-22 (State Student Count Day)

School Year 2022-23 Demographic Table

Grade Level Enrollment		
7th Grade	45	10%
8th Grade	68	15%
9th Grade	103	22%
10th Grade	98	21%
11th Grade	72	15%
12th Grade	80	17%
Gender		
Male	286	61%
Female	180	39%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	1%
Asian	5	1%
Black or African American	11	3%
Hispanic/Latino	9	2%
Two or More Races	19	4%
White	417	89%
Special Education		
Students with IEPs	92	20%
General Education Students	374	80%
Economically Disadvantaged		
Yes	190	41%
No	276	59%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maine Charter School Commission is the authorizer of nine charter districts. Each charter district holds a contract with the Commission containing a Performance Framework of indicators and targets the district shall meet to continue operating in Maine. The charter districts are evaluated annually as required by state statute. Data are gathered through the Maine Department of Education, Charter Districts, and Site Visits, as applicable.

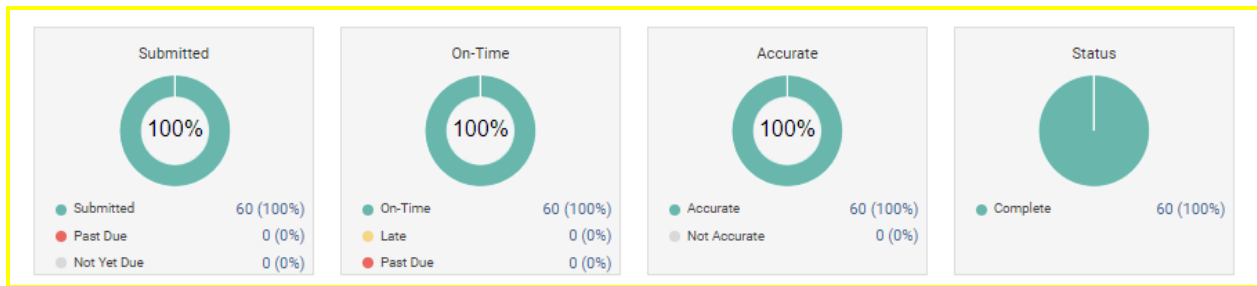
The Maine Charter School Commission has established a monitoring visit table for visit frequency and intensity. A copy of the Site Visit Manual can be found [HERE](#). Maine Connections Academy was on cycle to have a Site Visit at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Key documents and other information reviewed to determine progress on the charter district's performance framework and alignment with its mission are as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Leader Evaluation Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current enrollment and demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Roster
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current organizational chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panorama school climate survey results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School's self-assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board member meeting attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous year's monitoring report [as applicable]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School's strategic plan [as applicable]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School's reported performance framework results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ESP Contract and/or other important MOUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of current recruitment materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional Development Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student enrollment application

Document review is a major component of the Maine Charter School Commission's monitoring process, which happens throughout the year. Charter districts are required to submit reports and data for review. The

table below summarizes the charter districts' report and data submission completion throughout the 2022-23 school year:



2022-23 NARRATIVE

In school year 2022-23, Maine Connections Academy was successful in the following areas of the Performance Framework:

- High School Completion: With 89.5% of students graduating in 4 years, MCA's graduation rate is **meeting expectations** on the Performance Framework and exceeding the annual state target for 2023;
- Academics/Postsecondary: Accuplacer results will not be included on the Annual Report until SY2023-24. However, MCA already has 96% (reading) and 92% (math) meeting the goal. 100% of students met the ASVAB goal, and 58% (EW) and 50% (Math) met the SAT goal.
- Postsecondary Activities: 100% of students participated in at least one postsecondary opportunity;
- Teacher/Staff, Family and Student Satisfaction: The school is **exceeding expectations** as measured by the Panorama survey with all stakeholder groups;
- Governing Board Meetings: The school has held the required numbers of meetings and posted agendas and minutes in a timely fashion;
- Timely and Accurate Reports: The school is **exceeding expectations** in the percentage of reports that are delivered on-time and accurate to the Commission;
- The Facility: The facility is welcoming and supports programming;
- Student Attendance: The school reports a chronic absenteeism rate of 10.9%, **meeting expectations** on the Performance Framework; and
- Student Persistence: The school is **exceeding expectations** in the number of students that remain at the school throughout the year, and meeting expectations in the number of students that plan to return next year.

Not all Board members completed the required training modules during the 2022-23 school year; however, they are approaching expectations in this category.

Maine Connections Academy is currently in the penultimate year of the current contract. The Maine Charter School Commission will vote on the school's renewal during the October 2023 Commission Meeting.

End of Year Meeting

On June 6, 2023, the Maine Charter School Commission staff met with Billy Thompson, Maine Connections Academy Governing Board Chairperson; Walter Wallace, Head of School; Lauren Thompson, Assistant Principal; Joy Kiely, Special Education Director; Connie Ronco, Board Member; and Amy Trunnell, Chief Financial Officer to review the MCA charter application timeline and to discuss updated data and information.

Attendance

MCA is reporting a 2023 chronic absenteeism rate of 10.9%, which is **below the state average and meets expectations** on the Performance Framework. MCA has consistently low chronic absenteeism and credits the success with their proactive tiered process whereby they identify students who are at risk of low attendance, and meet with them and their families to develop a plan. Students and families have regular check-ins with the MCA learning coach to problem-solve, and hear frequent and consistent messaging about the importance of attendance.

Graduation

MCA reports that 89.5% of seniors graduated in 4-years. This increase allows MCA to **meet expectations** on the Performance Framework and exceeds the annual state target for 2023, and shows a strong improvement in graduation data over time. MCA attributes this improvement to efforts to improve teaching and learning, which has led to increased course passing rates, which ultimately leads to a higher graduation rate as more students are on-cohort and mastering the required standards.

MCA's passing rates reflect a positive trend across all grades and subject areas from 2019-20 to the first semester of 2021-22, as shown in the below table, noted from MCA approved application to increase student enrollment.

Passing Rates at MCA

	ELA		Math	
<i>Grades</i>	7-8	9-12	7-8	9-12

MCA 2021-22	94%	86%	90%	92%
MCA 2020-21	94%	87%	88%	93%
MCA 2019-20	84%	83%	84%	85%
	Science		Social Studies	
<i>Grades</i>	7-8	9-12	7-8	9-12
MCA 2021-22	91%	90%	87%	91%
MCA 2020-21	96%	90%	90%	96%
MCA 2019-20	92%	86%	88%	86%

Over the past several years, MCA has increased support staff in order to increase student achievement. Positions include a full time math interventionist, a full time reading interventionist, a full time staff member who oversees all academic and behavior interventions, a Multiple Pathways staff member to support students who are off-cohort, a special education teacher, an advisory teacher to support students and families with academic planning, a social worker and a full time staff member who provides academic and behavioral support to students on an IEP. Additionally, the school decreased the number of students in each advisory to increase connections and points-of-contact with families. MCA added a new intervention program to increase engagement from reluctant learners called Lexia Power UP. Finally, the school has focused staff professional development on increasing student engagement in a virtual setting and has hosted several Marzano Group trainings and staff Book Study.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Approached Expectation	Did Not Meet Expectation
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In the spring of 2023, the Maine Department of Education changed its state-wide assessment **from** the NWEA MAP Assessment **to** the Through-Year Assessment. As the assessment was new, the Commission asked schools to report the percentage of students assessed at each grade level, the percentage of students “at state expectation” and “above state expectation” on proficiency in both ELA and Math. Ratings would be developed once baselines were established.

Due to the Maine Department of Education’s delay in releasing data from the Spring administration of the Through-Year Assessment, there are no proficiency outcomes that can be reported at this time.

Subsequently, schools expressed a concern with the possibility of double testing students in the spring of 2023 (i.e., administering the NWEA MAP Assessment *and* the Through-Year Assessment). There were assurances made by the MDOE that the Through-Year Assessment results would show academic growth *comparable* to the growth results from the NWEA MAP Assessment and based on those assurances schools were allowed to apply for a waiver of the Commission-required NWEA MAP Assessment. ACADIA Academy applied for, and was granted, the waiver for the administration of the NWEA MAP Assessment in the spring. Because the data from the spring administration of the Through-Year Assessment has not been released, academic growth outcomes for students in grades 3-8 cannot be determined; nor can any subgroup analysis be done at this time.

An addendum to this report will be provided once the data are released and analyzed by school personnel and Commission staff.

SECTION 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT			
Criterion	Indicator	Target	Rating
1.1a	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment, ELA	Schools will report the percentage of students assessed at each grade level, and at the campus and district levels. Schools will report the percentage of students “at state expectation” and “above state expectation” on proficiency.	This indicator will not be rated in SY22-23. Ratings will be developed after the baseline is established. Percentage of students assessed: Percentage of Students “At State Expectation”: Percentage of Students “Above State Expectation”:
1.1b	Student Academic Proficiency -	Schools will report the percentage of students assessed at each grade level, and at the campus and district levels.	This indicator will not be rated in SY22-23.

	MDOE Through-Year Assessment, Math	Schools will report the percentage of students “at state expectation” and “above state expectation” on proficiency.	Ratings will be developed after the baseline is established Percentage of students assessed: Percentage of Students “At State Expectation”: Percentage of Students “Above State Expectation”:
1.3a	Student Academic Growth: NWEA MAP Growth 3rd-8th	School will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible ¹ students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP reading . <i>Participation under 85% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions.</i> <i>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</i> *NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023*	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%
			Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%
			Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%
1.3b	Student Academic Growth: NWEA MAP Growth 3rd-8th	School will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP language . <i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions</i> <i>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</i> *NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023*	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%
			Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%
			Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%
1.3c	Student Academic Growth: NWEA MAP Growth 3rd-8th	School will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP math . <i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions</i> <i>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</i> *NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023*	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%
			Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%
			Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%
1.4a	Subgroup Performance: Maine State Assessment (NWEA MAP) 3rd-8th	Subgroups* of students will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP reading . <i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions.</i>	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%

¹ Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score.

		<p>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</p> <p><i>*To be reported, subgroups must have at least 10 students or 5% of the student population.</i></p> <p>NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023</p>	<p>Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%</p>
			<p>Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.9%</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%</p>
1.4b	Subgroup Performance: Maine State Assessment (NWEA MAP) 3rd-8th	<p>Subgroups* of students will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP language.</p> <p><i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions.</i></p> <p>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</p> <p><i>*To be reported, subgroups must have at least 10 students or 5% of the student population.</i></p> <p>NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023</p>	<p>Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%</p>
			<p>Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%</p>
			<p>Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.49%</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%</p>
1.4c	Subgroup Performance: Maine State Assessment (NWEA MAP) 3rd-8th	<p>Subgroups* of students will meet the goal of 45%-55% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA MAP math.</p> <p><i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions.</i></p> <p>(Outcomes will be based on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment - fall to spring - unless the school has received a waiver for the spring administration and is only administering the MDOE Through Year Assessment)</p> <p><i>*To be reported, subgroups must have at least 10 students or 5% of the student population.</i></p> <p>NOTE - School received NWEA Testing Waiver for Spring 2023</p>	<p>Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 55%</p>
			<p>Meets Expectation Between 45%-54.9%</p>
			<p>Approaching Expectation Between 35%-44.49%</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectation Below 35%</p>
1.5	High School Completion	<p>4 year high school graduation rate (current cohort)</p> <p>Schools will meet annual goals*:</p> <p>2023-86% 2024-87% 2025-87% 2026-88% 2027-88% 2028-89% 2029-89% 2030-90%</p> <p><i>*The state of Maine goal is 90% graduation rate by the end of</i></p>	<p>Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 90%</p>
			<p>Meets Expectation Meets annual target</p> <p>School reported 89.5% of students graduated in 4-years.</p>

		2030. Maine Department of Education Graduation Rates by Year	Approaching Expectation Less than 5% below target
			Does Not Meet Expectation 5% or more below target
1.6a	Post Secondary Readiness	<u>Beginning in SY 2023-2024</u> , school will meet goal of 75%-85% students meeting one of the following by the end of 12th grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuplacer The College Readiness indicator with scores of 239 or above in reading and a 226 or above in math or; • SAT scores of ERBW 530 or higher and 520 in math or; • ASVAB score of 31 or higher <p><i>Participation under 95% may result in an investigation from MCSC to determine potential interventions.</i></p> <p>School report the following percentages met the goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuplacer Reading: 96% • Accuplacer Math: 92% • SAT EW: 58% • SAT Math: 50% • ASVAB: 100% 	In SY 2022-2023, schools will report the data, but will not be rated.
1.6b	Post Secondary Readiness/ Achievement Gaps	Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups* on the Accuplacer, SAT or ASVAB. The school will provide achievement data of major subgroups (English learner, special education, sex, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities). <i>*To be reported, subgroups must have at least 10 students or 5% of the student population.</i> School reported the following percentage met the goal for subgroups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuplacer: Students on 504s in Math 	In SY 2022-2023, schools will report the data, but will not be rated.
1.6c	Post Secondary Readiness: Post-Secondary Activity	At the end of their graduating year, 70%-80% of each schools' students will have successfully ² participated in at least one post-secondary activity such as (<u>and not limited to</u>) college course, Advanced Placement course, certificate program, career technical coursework or internship.	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 80% MCA reported that 100% of students participated in at least one postsecondary opportunity.
			Meets Expectation 70%-79.9%
			Approaching Expectation 60%-69.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 60%
1.6d	Post-Secondary Readiness: FAFSA	Schools will report annual rates and school-supported opportunities for FAFSA support.	The Commission will monitor a charter school's ability to support students with FAFSA completion. School reported that 37 families

² Successfully is defined as passing, meeting appropriate standards, or other clearly defined measure of success.

			<i>filled out the FAFSA.</i>
SECTION 2: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT			
2.1	State Compliance	<p>The school operates in compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding public Charter District Leaderships, including exclusionary practices.</p> <p>MRSA 20-A Title 20-A, Chapter 112: Public Charter District Leaderships Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</p>	No rating is provided for <i>Criterion 2.1: State Compliance</i> . Site visit reports that include a section for this criterion identify specific concerns the school must address.
2.2	Family Engagement: Panorama School Climate Survey -Family Results	<p>Results from 3/3 required scales* on the Family Panorama School Climate Survey will be within the average range (50% or higher) when compared to like schools (%FRL, grade band, urban/rural). Participation must be a minimum of 35% in order to qualify. Participation must be a minimum of 35% in order to qualify. Participation under 35% will automatically result in a "does not meet standard."</p> <p><i>*Required Scales: School Climate, Safety, and School Fit</i></p> <p>MCA's family participation was 41%. Results on the required scales are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Climate - In the 99th percentile nationally compared to like schools School Safety - In the 99th percentile nationally compared to like schools School Fit - In the 60th percentile nationally compared to like schools 	Exceeds Expectation All 3 of the 3 required scales in the above average range for like schools
			Meets Expectation All 3 of the 3 required scales in the average range for like schools
			Approaching Expectation 2 of the 3 required scales in the average range for like schools
			Does Not Meet Expectation 0 or 1 of the 3 required scales in the average range for like schools or participation rate is less than 35%
2.3	School Climate: Panorama School Climate Survey -Student Results	<p>Results from 4/4 of the required scales* on the Student Panorama School Climate Survey will be within the average range (50% or higher) when compared to like schools (%RFL, grade band, urban/rural). Participation among eligible students must be a minimum of 75% in order to qualify. Participation under 75% will automatically result in a "does not meet standard."</p> <p><i>*Required Scales: School Climate, Safety, Rigorous Expectations and Teacher-Student Relationships</i></p> <p>MCA's student participation rate was 87%. Results on the required scales are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Climate - In the 99th percentile nationally compared to like schools <p>NOTE - Due to an issue with the setup of the spring 2023 Panorama survey, only results from the School Climate were available.</p>	Exceeds Expectation All 4 of the 4 required scales in the above average range for like schools
			Meets Expectation All 4 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools
			Approaching Expectation At least 3 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 3 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools or participation rate is less than 75%
2.4	School Climate: Panorama School Climate Survey -Teacher/Staff Results	<p>Results from at least 4/4 of the required scales* on the Teacher/Staff Panorama School Climate Surveys will be within the average range (50% or higher) when compared to like schools (%RFL, grade band, urban/rural). Participation must be a minimum of 75% in order to qualify. Participation under 75% will automatically results in a "does not meet standard."</p> <p><i>*Required Scales: School Climate, Leadership, Professional Learning and Feedback and Coaching</i></p>	Exceeds Expectation All 4 of the 4 required scales in the above average range for like schools
			Meets Expectation All 4 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools

		<p>MCA's teacher/staff participation rate was 94%. Results on the required scales are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Climate - In the 93rd percentile nationally compared to like schools • School Leadership - In the 93rd percentile nationally compared to like schools • Professional Learning - In the 97th percentile nationally compared to like schools • Feedback and Coaching - In the 93rd percentile nationally compared to like schools 	<p>Approaching Expectation At least 3 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools</p> <p>Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 3 of the 4 required scales in the average range for like schools or participation rate is less than 75%</p>
2.5	School Climate: Panorama Survey	Annually, the school will review its Panorama Education School Climate survey results and develop an action plan to address areas for continued improvement. Plan and outcome will be submitted to the Commission.	<p>Meets Expectation School develops and implements plan</p> <p>Approaching Expectation School develops and partially implements the plan</p> <p>Does Not Meet Expectation School does not develop or does not implement plan</p>
SECTION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY			
3.1	Governing Board effectiveness	<p>Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of trustee members are active and engaged, fulfill their legal responsibilities and obligations, comply with the board's bylaws, and always act in the best interests of the school community. <p>Talent strategy and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the Charter District Leadership administration, financial health, progress towards meeting academic and other school goals, and alignment with the mission and other terms of the charter, without managing the day-to-day operations of the school. The board conducts appropriate oversight of the officers and leaders of the organization, including an annual evaluation of the leader and considers succession planning. <p>Culture of Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Board has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes; board of trustee's meetings are designed to foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions to facilitate and ensure public accountability. <p>Focus on Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Board engages in continuous and strategic improvement planning by setting, and regularly monitoring progress relative to, priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission, vision, and educational philosophy and the accountability cycles of the authorizer. 	<p>Low Risk: Board has fulfilled contract obligations as charter contract holder in the State of Maine</p> <p>Moderate Risk: Board has demonstrated a lack of capacity to be a strong contracting partner and may have failed to fulfill some contract obligations as charter contract holder in the State of Maine. MCSC may develop a monitoring plan to ensure the solvency of the school.</p> <p>High Risk: Board has not fulfilled contract obligations as a charter contract holder in the State of Maine. MCSC may intervene with mitigation measures or other intervention protocols.</p>
3.2	Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant	The Governing Board will hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year ³ in accordance with approved bylaws and in accordance with the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA).	Meets Expectation 6 or more meetings

³ A school year is July 1 - June 30

	Board operations		Does Not Meet Expectation 5 or fewer meetings
3.3	Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operations	Timely ⁴ publication of Board meeting agenda and minutes upon approval and submission to the Charter Commission, that thoroughly captures the discussion and decisions of the board.	Meets Expectation All minutes and agendas posted timely
			Approaching Expectation 1-2 items not posted timely
			Does Not Meet Expectation 3 or more not posted timely
3.4	Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness	80%-90% of reports are submitted on time and are accurate and complete. 100% of required reports/documents were submitted on time with 100% accuracy	Exceeds Expectation More than 90% of reports are submitted on time and are accurate and complete
			Meets Expectation 80%-89.9% of reports are submitted on time and are accurate and complete
			Approaching Expectation 70%-79.9% of reports are submitted on time and are accurate and complete
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 70% of reports are submitted on time and are accurate and complete
3.5	Board Training	Board members will engage in a baseline of annual training and development using the following guidelines. (LINK)	Exceeds Expectations Board provides evidence of development opportunities, such as: an annual board retreat, third-party consultation for board training on identified growth areas, an annual self-governance evaluation process, etc.
			Meets Expectations 100% of required courses have been taken and evidence is provided
			Approaching Expectations 80%-99.9% of required courses are taken and evidence is provided
			Does Not Meet Expectations Less than 80% of required courses have been completed
3.6	Facility meets Local and State requirements	The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meets all local and state requirements for public school facilities, including current Certificate of Occupancy and a Plan for maintenance	Exceeds Expectations Charter District Leadership has obtained an environmentally

⁴ Timely is defined as posting agenda a minimum of 5 business days before the meeting and for minutes, posting within 5 business days of approval.

		and capital improvements of school facilities consistent with 20-A M.R.S. §1001(2), 4001, 4502(5)(C); Maine DOE Rule Chapter 125.5.03 and 20-A M.R.S §6302, 6501: Maine DOE Rule Chapter 125.5.10 Public School Approval Requirements and Citation Chart	friendly certification such as LEED Meets Expectations Certified as required and approved by the Board Does Not Meet Expectations Not certified as required
3.7	Facility supports Programming	The facility provides a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing campus environment that optimizes learning, teaching, and working for all students, faculty, and staff.	Meets Expectation Facility provides a campus environment that optimizes learning, teaching, and working that supports mission and key design element implementation. Approaching Expectation Facility partly, but not fully, provides a campus environment that optimizes learning, teaching and working that supports mission and key design element implementation. Does Not Meet Expectation Facility does not provide a campus environment that optimizes learning, teaching and working that supports mission and key design element implementation.
SECTION 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND VIABILITY (Results will be available once the FY23 Financial Audit is received and outcomes will be reported once Commission staff and consultants have reviewed the information submitted.)			
4.1a	Current Ratio (Near-Term Measures)	Current ratio is greater than or equal to 1.1. <i>Current assets divided by current liabilities.</i>	Lower Risk Greater than 1.5 Moderate Risk 1.0-1.5 High Risk Less than 1
4.1b	Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand (Near-Term Measures)	Unrestricted days cash will be at least 30 days. <i>Unrestricted cash divided by ([total expenses minus depreciation expense]/365)</i>	Lower Risk 60 or more days Moderate Risk 30-60 days High Risk Fewer than 30 days
4.1c	Enrollment Variance (Near-Term Measures)	Actual enrollment is within 5% of the enrollment projected in the approved budget. <i>Actual Enrollment divided by Enrollment Projection in Charter District Leadership Board Approved Budget</i>	Lower Risk Actual within 2% of the projected enrollment Moderate Risk Variance is between 2 and 5% High Risk Variance is greater than 5% of the projected enrollment

4.1d	Financial Obligations Default (Near-Term Measures)	The school meets all debt and real estate lease obligations. <i>Failure to make required lease, principal and interest payments on-time or to meet covenant terms.</i>	Lower Risk Not in default and not delinquent
			Moderate Risk In default and/or delinquent and has obtained waivers from lenders and/or lessors
			High Risk In default and/or delinquent
4.2a	Total Margin (Sustainability Measures)	The School's Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is positive, and the most recent year Total Margin is positive. <i>Net Surplus divided by Total Revenue</i>	Lower Risk Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is at least 1.5% and the most recent year Total Margin is positive
			Moderate Risk Aggregated Two-Year Total Margin is at least 1.5%
			High Risk Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is negative and/or the most recent year Total Margin is negative. Or the margin for the latest year is -10% or lower.
4.2b	Debt to asset ratio (Sustainability Measure)	The debt to asset ratio will be less than 0.9. <i>Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets</i>	Lower Risk Less than 90%
			Moderate Risk 90 to 100%
			High Risk Greater than 100%
4.2c	Cash Flow (Sustainability Measure)	Charter District Leadership maintains a positive cumulative 2-year cash flow. <i>Cash Flow = Net Annual Change in Unrestricted Cash. Cumulative Cash Flow is the sum of current and prior year Cash Flow</i>	Lower Risk A positive cumulative 2-year cash flow and positive cash flow in the most recent year.
			Moderate Risk A positive cumulative 2-year cash flow
			High Risk Does not have a positive cumulative 2-year cash flow and had negative cash flow in the most recent year.
4.2d	Financial Obligations Coverage Ratio (Sustainability Measure)	Charter District Leadership is able to pay current debt principal and interest and lease payments from the current year surplus. <i>(Net Surplus + Depreciation + Interest + Lease Expense)/(Annual Principal + Interest + Lease Payments)</i>	Lower Risk Exceeds 1.1
			Moderate Risk Is 1.0 to 1.1
			High Risk Is less than 1.0

4.3	Financial Planning and Budgeting	<p>Charter District Leadership publishes a 3-year annual financial plan that includes a 2-year annual budget and a 1-year projection for year 3 that is board approved.</p> <p>The 3-year annual financial plan is due on August 31st.</p>	<p>Meets Expectation Charter District Leadership annually publishes a 3-year financial plan that includes a budget for the next 2-years and a 1-year projection for year 3.</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectations Charter District Leadership has not published a current 3-year financial plan that includes a budget for the next 2-years and a 1-year projection for year 3.</p>

SECTION 5: FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER AND THE LAW

5.1	Mission and Key Design Implementation	<p>1.The school demonstrates its approved mission.</p> <p>2.The school implements the key design elements* in the approved charter and any subsequently approved amendments in a manner that serves all of its students.</p> <p>3.The Board and Administration share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter.</p> <p><i>*Key Design Elements are aspects of the school, originally articulated in the charter application or in subsequent amendments, which make the school unique and distinct from other district or Charter Schools.</i></p>	<p>Meets Expectation School is implementing the mission and design elements as outlined in the charter and amendments</p>
			<p>Approaching Expectation School is partially implementing the mission and design elements as outlined in the charter and amendments</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectation School is not implementing the majority of the mission and design elements as outlined in the charter and amendments</p>
5.2	Student Attendance	<p><u>Chronic absenteeism</u> rate</p> <p>Schools will have 10%-18% or fewer students classified as chronically absent⁵ on the last day of school.</p> <p>Chronic absenteeism rates will be reported at both the campus and district levels.</p> <p>Pre-K rates are not part of MDOE's chronic absenteeism calculations. Schools will report Pre-K chronic absenteeism rates, though this target outcome will not be rated.</p>	<p>Exceeds Expectation Fewer than 10%</p>
			<p>Meets Expectation 10%-18%</p> <p>School reports chronic absenteeism of 10.9%.</p>
			<p>Approaching Expectation 17.9%-25%</p>
			<p>Does Not Meet Expectation Greater than 25%</p>
5.3	Student Persistence - School Year	<p>Persistence throughout the school year</p> <p>85% or more of eligible⁶ students enrolled on the last day of school will be the same students who were enrolled on State Student Count Day⁷.</p>	<p>Exceeds Expectation More than 90%</p> <p>School reports 90% student persistence throughout the school year.</p>
			<p>Meets Expectation</p>

⁵ Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

⁶ Student resident in the state of Maine

⁷ Student Count Day is October 1

			85%-89.9%
			Approaching Expectation 75%-84.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 75%
5.4	Student Persistence - Year-to-Year	Recurrent enrollment from one year to the next 85%-89.9% or more of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school will have completed an Intent to Reenroll form for the following SY by March 31 of current SY.	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 90%
			Meets Expectation 85%-89.9%
			<i>School reports 86% recurrent enrollment from one year to the next.</i>
			Approaching Expectation 75%-84.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 75%
SECTION 6: SCHOOL CUSTOMIZATION			
6.1	Participation in extracurricular activities	At least 80% of students will participate in 1 or more school sponsored field trips, activity day, special event, or club.	Exceeds Expectation Exceeds 85%
			Meets Expectation 75%-84.9%
			Approaching Expectation 65%-74.9%
			Does Not Meet Expectation Fewer than 65%

MID-YEAR MEETING REPORT

2022-23 Mid-Year Meeting Maine Connections Academy

March 30, 2023

On March 8, 2023, the Maine Charter School Commission staff completed a mid-year meeting in person and via Zoom with Billy Thompson, Maine Connections Academy Governing Board Chairperson; Walter Wallace, Head of School; Lauren Thompson, Assistant Principal; and Amy Trunnell, Chief Financial Officer. Topics covered included academic proficiency and growth, student attendance, projected graduation rates, finances, student enrollment and recruitment, facilities, and the governing board.

Recommendations

- No recommendations at this time.

Academic

Maine Connections Academy (MCA) outperformed the state average in English Language Arts on the NWEA MAP Assessment with 90.4% of the students meeting or exceeding expectations (state average for SY2021-22 was 83.8%). In Reading, MCA's NWEA MAP projected RIT growth is 41.2%, which is below the national average (45%-55%). In Language, NWEA MAP Growth's projected RIT growth is 55.4%, above the national average.

MCA outperformed the state average in Math on the NWEA MAP Assessment with 92.3% of students meeting or exceeding expectations (state average for SY2021-22 was 81.3%). The percentage of students meeting school-wide projected RIT growth in math is 49.5%, meeting the national average for growth.

School leadership reports that they are focused on retaining students and supporting them to pass their classes successfully. The flexibility of the schedule allows teachers to spend time supporting students individually and in small groups to master standards needed for class completion. The school team reports that the passing rate has increased to 92% of students passing classes. The team notes that supporting all students has been the focal point of professional development. Teams meet to discuss students and put action plans in place to support them to succeed. Professional development has been more structured this year, which has been met with positive feedback from the teaching staff. The school recently completed a professional development cycle with the Marzano Group.

The school has determined that they will administer the NWEA in the state-required/ Commission-required grades and the Accuplacer or SAT in high school. MCA has administered the Accuplacer to all students in 12th grade and reports that they have already met the SY2023-24 participation rates and performance target. The students that elected to take the SAT opted out of the Accuplacer assessment.

The school team noted that their teachers are focused on increasing the academic performance of students in subgroup populations, specifically those on IEPs. Teachers use "Supervision Meetings" to discuss individual student data and to action plan. The school has four teachers devoted to special education who meet with the Special Education Director regularly to review performance data.

Attendance

MCA's SY2021-22 rate of chronic absenteeism was 7.9%, where they exceeded expectations on the Performance Framework. The school reports that their current rate of chronic absenteeism is 8.96%, putting them significantly below the state average. If their rate of chronic absenteeism continues until the end of the year, the school will again exceed expectations on the Performance Framework.

The school noted that students are required to be in school online each day for a minimum of five hours to be counted as present. Every live lesson is recorded and teachers require students to complete an exit ticket assignment at the end of each lesson. This allows students to make up schoolwork, if needed.

Graduation

MCA's SY2021-22 graduation rate was 73.9%, lower than the state average of 86.3% and not meeting expectations on the Performance Framework. The school team reports that they expect 79% of seniors to graduate this year. The school notes that their graduation rates have continued to trend upwards over the last three years, and continue to be lower than their goal. The school attributes the growth in their graduation rate to several factors, including hiring a teacher to assist students who are offtrack for graduation to form a credit-recovery plan. The school notes that their graduation goal is 86%, and while they do not anticipate reaching it this year, they plan to get close. The school team reported that they hold students to a high bar for graduation expectations, requiring students to accrue more than the minimum number of credits required by the state for graduation. Additionally, MCA accepts students throughout the year at all grade levels, unlike similar high schools. Supporting students who enter the school who are undercredited in 11th and 12th grades continues to pose a challenge.

Financial Performance

MCA is low risk in all financial criteria on the Performance Framework and maintains a strong financial position. The school has recently allocated additional resources to student support, creating new interventionist positions to support students in reading and math, a Social Worker, and positions to support students who are off-track to graduate. The school has invested in Pearson's electives courses, offering the students a vast and varied selection of optional online electives courses. The school team notes that funds are directed to positions that directly support students, and not to additional administration. The school is able to maintain an efficient administrative team because of the "extensive" administrative support from Pearson.

Student Enrollment and Recruitment

The school's current enrollment is 457 students. MCA recently had a charter amendment approved by the Commission to increase their enrollment to 500 students next year. The school is confident that they will enroll 500 students in SY2023-24 due to their robust waitlist.

Facilities

Although MCA is a virtual school, they are required to maintain a facility from which teachers and administrators work. The school is currently analyzing facility needs and discussing options for facilities to pursue when their current lease ends in August 2024.

Governing Board

The Board Chair reports that the board functions well. There are currently no open seats on the board. The Board Chair noted successes of the board including a smooth transition of presidency, strong attendance at meetings, proficiency using Boardable software, and knowledgeable and involved members. The Board Chair notes that an area of improvement is encouraging all board members to complete the required Epicenter board training.

The Board Chair noted that they work with Pearson to determine board agendas and that they receive a financial update at every meeting. Teachers periodically present at Board Meetings to help board members gain a deeper understanding of the school program. Twice yearly the board discusses school and school leadership goals. The Board Chair named the stabilization of school leadership as the essential ingredient that has led to the academic improvement at MCA over the past several years. The Board Chair hopes that the virtual nature of the school can be used as a model for other schools, especially as it relates to students taking classes with like-minded students across the country.