



MEVA 2023-2024  
Evaluation Proposal  
Submitted: September 2023

## Introduction

This proposal is being submitted by Dr. Madden and Associates, a research and consulting company that specializes in the areas of education, health, and human services. Dr. Madden has a Doctor of Philosophy in education, human development, and women's studies. Her resume is attached. Dr. Madden has served as the external evaluator for the Maine Virtual Academy for the past two years. This proposal follows up on key findings in the 2022-2023 evaluation report. In that evaluation, a small number (N=4) of families participated in a case study. The findings were interesting, but the small number of case studies were a limitation of the study. Therefore, in 2023-2024 we seek to conduct a multi-case case study with the intent of using the individual case studies to identify themes, patterns, similarities, and difference in the experience of MEVA families.

## Evaluation Questions

- Why do students and their families choose MEVA?
- How do they acclimate to MEVA during the first four to six weeks including the culture, and expectations?
- What do students find most challenging about acclimating to MEVA and what supports do they seek out to deal with the challenges?
- After at least one semester at MEVA, how does the experience at MEVA meet, or not meet, students' and parents' expectations, especially in addressing the reason they sought out MEVA?

## Methodology

The methodology for this study will be a multi-case case study approach. This enables the evaluator/researcher to use replication to identify trends, differences, and similarities. The goal is to recruit 15 families (parents and students) that are new to MEVA to participate in an interview after they have been at MEVA for approximately four to six weeks. Middle and high school students and their families will be recruited to participate. We will do our best to achieve a balance of younger and older students. These parents and students will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview near the end of the academic year.

## Interviews

The Program Manager of Operations at MEVA will take the lead on recruiting participants. She will contact families, explain the study, and schedule students and parents, who agree to participate. We

will initially attempt to recruit 10-12 families from each semester to increase our chances of reaching our goal of 15 families.

Dr. Madden will conduct the interviews virtually. Prior to the first interview question the purpose of the interview, confidentiality, and other participants rights will be explained to both parents and students. Students are required to have their parent's permission to participate. Each family will have the choice to participate in the same interview or separate interviews. Each interview will be about 30 minutes.

Questions for the interviews will be developed based on questions used in 2022-2023 case study interviews, learnings from the case studies, and MEVA's Panorama Survey results. The initial interview will focus on reasons for selecting MEVA and their experiences with onboarding and acclimating to the virtual school. The second interview will be conducted at the end of the school year and focus on assessing the student's and parent's overall experience with MEVA including whether the experience met their expectations and addressed their initial reasons for enrolling in MEVA. Each participant will receive a gift card thanking them for partaking in the interview. Gift cards will likely be to Starbuck or Amazon card.

### Analysis, Interpretation, and Findings

Interviews will be recorded to ensure data has been accurately captured. Transcripts will be developed for each interview. Qualitative data will be analyzed using Dedoose, a software for analyzing qualitative and mix-method data. A case study based on the initial and year-end interviews will be developed for each student and their parent/legal guardian.

Following the development of the individual case studies, Dr. Madden will conduct an analysis across the case studies to identify themes, similarities and differences for the students and their families. The cross-case analysis will be used to develop recommendations for MEVA to enhance the experience of students and families.

A final report will be available and presented to the MEVA School Board in September 2024. The report will describe the context, the evaluation questions, methodology, description of analysis and interpretation, findings of the study, and recommendations for MEVA.

Below are the estimated expenses for the 2023-2024 proposal.

### Estimated Expenses

Evaluator	72 hours @150. Per hour	\$10,800
Editor	15 hours at @150 per hour	\$2,250
Transcription services	1.50 per minutes of recording for	\$1,350
Incentives	30 individuals at \$20 per person (2 interviews each)	\$600
Total		\$15,000