APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Business Meeting

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

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

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

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

Reminders:

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

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

Directors Present

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

Directors Absent
None

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

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

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

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

Roll Call

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

II. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None were proposed.

III. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

The School Performance Committee met on September 1.

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

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

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

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on September 1st.

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

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

C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on September 1st.

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

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

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

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

IV. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

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

V. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

There were no individual school updates this month.

B. Organizational Updates

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

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

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

C. Media Updates

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

VI. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. SY2025-26 Year End Enrollment/Unenrollment

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

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

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

VII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

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

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

Roll Call

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. New Governing Board Members

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

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board

Lisa Coombs resigned from the Maine Connections Academy governing board.

C. Board Member Term Outs

None reported.

IX. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

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

October

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

November

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

December

- NO MEETING

X. Announcements

A. Important Dates

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

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

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

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

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

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

XI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Allen

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* 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.

As of September 24, 2025, state law reclassified the Maine Charter School Commission as "a public body corporate and politic and an incorporated public instrumentality of the State." This means the Commission is now its own legal entity within state government. It can act in its own name — entering into contracts, managing state, federal, and private

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