

**90-Day Visit to Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences November 19, 2013**

**Site Team Members:** Shelley Reed, Jana Lapoint, Laurie Pendleton, Robert Kautz, MCSC Executive Director, and Maine Department of Education Special Education personnel Peg Armstrong

**Brief overview of the visit:** Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is physically located at 25 Shaker Road, Gray, Maine. It serves preschool through grade 2 students. Site team members were taken on a tour of the school, visiting common areas, and every classroom and met in the theater production room. An overview was given by Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Principal.

Meeting time was spent with Governing Board members, School Administration, Teachers and other staff, students, parents and volunteers.

**Documents provided to team:**

Notebook with responses to Monitoring categories

- Academic proficiencies and growth-preliminary fall assessment, gaps,
- attendance for September and October 43 days at 94%,
- special education compliance
- financial performance and stability-July-October 2013 profit and loss budget vs. actual, monthly budget through June 2014,
- governing board stewardship-minutes of board meetings,
- facilities-cleaning logs available
- social and academic climate,
- and parent and community engagement-log showing 355 volunteer hours, community engagement through field trips

Insurance documentation sent previous to visit.

**Summary comments of the Team’s visit:**

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Not yet documented or begun</b>	<b>Under development/in progress</b>	<b>Substantially underway or completed</b>
Student Academic Proficiency		System for assessing proficiency in place, teacher support training upcoming in December, first parent-teacher conferences Training support for teachers in matching observation to standards	

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Student Academic Growth			System in place for individual student data
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups			Additional special education needs identified and staff hired
Student Attendance			94% student attendance to date
Recurrent enrollment from year to year	NA		
Postsecondary Readiness (for HS)	NA		
Financial Performance and Sustainability			Budget for year projected showing positive balance
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship			Governing Board members engaged and active in fundraising, problem solving, scrutiny of budget, recruiting appropriate new members
Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in support of program			Team observed clean facility, school leased space from center no major plans for improvement until school expands into larger space
School Social and Academic Climate		Survey in development	Supportive and inclusive environment for students, staff, parents

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Parent and Community Engagement			100% parent response to conferences 355 volunteer hours in first months Parents receive a detail newsletter regularly, with pictures and skill development ,postings on Shutterfly

**Observations:**

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences was well prepared for the site team visit providing documentation of performance indicators relevant to the time frame.

The school is substantially underway in all designated review categories

The school is applauded for getting the assessment data system up and running and ongoing work to train teachers and standardize data across classrooms

The school has identified special education students quickly and responded by hiring appropriate personnel -a special education director and teacher

The learning environment is supportive, engaging for students, staff and parents

Children were observed to be excited, able to share what they were learning, including Spanish

Financial statements were in order and a positive balance sheet projected

The Governing Board is actively discussing, problem solving and fund raising while learning to be a charter school board with posted agendas, public comment times and actively notifying parents of this opportunity to comment

Teachers are finding that they need more time to plan together so they now have about one hour 3 times a week with lead teachers having a bit more time together.

In Summary the Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is staying true to its mission and vision building an exciting learning community supportive and inclusive for students, staff and parents. One parent’s comment stands out “Kids are allowed to be who they are, not what they are not”. Throughout the school and programs there are not your kids and my kids but all of ours to nurture.