

Maine Charter School Commission



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2019-2020

January 2021

The Maine State Charter School Commission will provide thoughtful stewardship in authorizing and monitoring public charter schools consistent with State statutes to create unique, high-quality learning options for Maine students.

January 2021

On August 18, 2020, the Maine Charter School Commission Review Team completed a Zoom meeting with Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences' administration and Governing Board. The Review Team also reviewed data provided by the school. Information gathered from documents and interviews were used to determine the extent to which the school has met its contracted performance targets. This report addresses the school's performance relative to the performance framework.

In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 virus, the school year was abruptly interrupted by the need for schools to close their facilities and continue the remainder of the school year via remote instruction. The Maine Charter School Commission realizes that these months were stressful and difficult for students, teachers, and families, and that the learning and assessments completed during this time were likely affected by the situation. The Maine Charter School Commission will take circumstances into consideration when reviewing data and making high-stakes decisions.

Commission Liaison to the School	Dr. Fern Desjardins
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post
Commission Consultant	Joe Drago, CPA
Commission Consultant	Dr. Joe Mattos

School's Mission	To unfold the potential of children, in a respectful, loving culture through authentic and meaningful experiences that sustain a sense of wonder, a love of learning and embrace the interconnectedness of all things.
School's Vision	To provide for the foundational needs of growing children in a community where children, teachers, and families learn together in a nurturing environment.

Section 1: School Information

School Name	Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences
Address	25 Shaker Road, Gray, ME 04039

Governing Board

Board Chair	Bill Doughty
Board Vice Chair	Sally Morris
Board Treasurer	Melanie Prinz
Board Secretary	Carolyn Beem
Board Member	Vincent Micale
Board Member	Douglas Lynch
Board Member	Ben Kramer
Board Member	Penny Collins

Administrative Team

Executive Director	Jacinda Cotton-Castro
Coordinator of Teaching and Learning	Lori Towle
Special Education Director	Lee Ann Arnold

Year Opened	2013
Years in Operation	8
Number of Sending Districts*	<i>Pending</i>
Grades Served	PreK-7
Current Enrollment*	<i>Pending</i>
Students on Waiting List*	29*

**As of October 1, 2020, certified enrollment count*

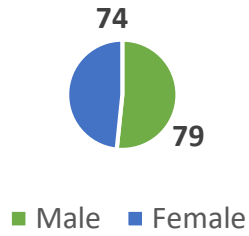
Section 2: Indicator Summary Table

Indicator	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Other
Student Academic Proficiency (See Page 6)					
Target 1					*
Target 2					*
Target 3					*
Target 4					*
Student Academic Growth (See Page 6)					
Target 1					*
Target 2					*
Target 3					*
Target 4					*
Target 5					*
Target 6					*
Achievement Gaps (See Page 7)					
Target 1					*
Target 2					*
Student Attendance (See Page 8)					
Target 1			X		
Target 2		X			
Student Enrollment (See Page 8)					
Target 1		X			
Target 2	X				
Financial Performance and Stability (See Page 8)					
Target 1		Pending			
Target 2		financial			
Target 3		audit			
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship (See Page 9)					
Target 1	X				
Target 2		X			
Adequacy of Facilities Management (See Page 9)					
Target 1		X			
Target 2		X			
School Social and Academic Climate (See Page 10)					
Target 1		X			
Target 2					*
Target 3					*
Target 4					*
Target 5		X			

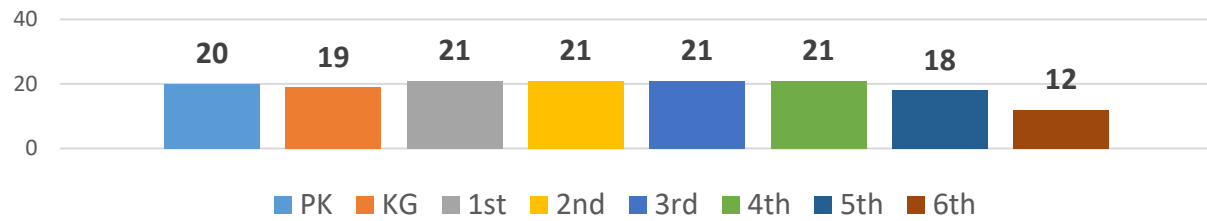
**Due to COVID-19 and school facility closures, many assessments and evaluations were not given*

Section 3: Demographics 2019-2020

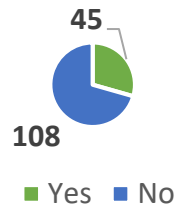
Gender Breakdown



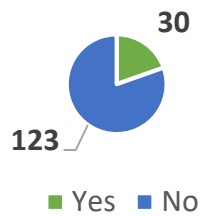
Grade Breakdown



Economically Disadvantaged



Special Education



Section 4: Student Academic Proficiency

Measure	Target	Results	
Percentage of students scoring in the meets or exceeds categories on the MEA in ELA in grades 3-5	The percentage of students in grades 3-5 scoring in the meets and exceeds categories on the MEA will be equal to or higher than the state average in the meets and exceeds categories on the MEA.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maine Department of Education applied for, and received, waivers that eliminate state assessment requirements for this year.	NA
Percentage of students scoring in the meets or exceeds categories on the MEA in math in grades 3-5	The percentage of students in grades 3-5 scoring in the meets and exceeds categories on the MEA will be within 20% below or higher than the state average in the meets and exceeds categories on the MEA.		NA
Percentage of students PreK-2 Meets Proficiency in ELA as measured by the Work Sampling System spring administration	The percentage of students in grades PreK-2 meeting Proficiency in the Language and Literacy portion of the spring Work Sampling System will be 65% or greater.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, spring assessments were cancelled.	NA
Percentage of students PreK-2 Meets Proficiency in math as measured by the Work Sampling System spring administration	The percentage of students in grades PreK-2 meeting Proficiency in the Math portion of the spring Work Sampling System will be 65% or greater.	Due to this cancellation, proficiency data are available to report	NA

Section 5: Student Academic Growth

Measure	Target	Results	
Percentage of students PreK-1 making growth in ELA as measured by the Work Sampling System fall and spring administrations	The percentage of students in grades PreK-1 showing growth in the Language and Literacy portion of the spring Work Sampling System will be 85% or greater.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, spring assessments were cancelled. Due to this cancellation, no growth data are available to report.	NA
Percentage of students PreK-1 making growth in math as measured by the Work Sampling System fall and spring administrations	The percentage of students in grades PreK-1 showing growth in the math portion of the spring Work Sampling System will be 85% or greater.		NA

Students in gr. 2 and up will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores in ELA reading and language from fall to spring of each school year.	Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year.		NA
Students in gr. 2 and up will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores in math from fall to spring of each school year.	Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year.		NA
Growth on NWEA as measured by projected growth on MAP assessment	School will meet goal of 70% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA ELA reading and language by the end of the school year 2021–2022.		NA
Growth on NWEA as measured by projected growth on MAP assessment	School will meet goal of 70% of eligible students will meet their projected growth on NWEA math by the end of the school year 2021-2022.		NA

Section 6: Achievement Gaps

Subgroups must have at least ten students to be reportable. Subgroups may not be combined to create a super-subgroup.

Measure	Target	Results	
Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups on the Maine State Assessments.	The school will provide evidence of closing identified achievement gaps of major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities).	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maine Department of Education applied for, and received, waivers that eliminate state assessment requirements for this year.	NA
Achievement gaps in growth between major subgroups on the NWEA.	The school will provide evidence of closing identified achievement gaps of major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities).	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the spring NWEA test window was cancelled. Due to this cancellation, no growth data are available to report.	NA

Section 7: Student Attendance

Measure	Target	Results	
Chronic absenteeism	Schools will have 10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school. (Through March 13, 2020)	20% of students were chronically absent as of March 13, 2020. A 5 percent decrease from 2018-19.	Partially Met
Average Daily Attendance	Schools will have an average daily attendance rate in grades pre-k – 8 of 93% or higher. (Through March 13, 2020)	The average daily attendance rate through March 13, 2020 was 93.30%.	Met

Section 8: Student Enrollment

Measure	Target	Results	
Enrollment throughout the school year	85% or more of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school will be the same students who were enrolled on State Student Count Day.	97% of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school were the same students who were enrolled on state student count day.	Exceeded
Recurrent enrollment from one year to the next	85% or more of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school will have completed an Intent to reenroll form for the next year.	99% of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school completed an Intent to reenroll form for the next school year.	Exceeded

Section 9: Financial Performance and Stability

Measure	Target	Results	
Near Term Measures a) Current Ratio b) Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand	School evaluates its Near-Term Financial Health using the Financial Performance and Stability outline provided by the Commission.	Near-Term Financial Health was reviewed by the Commission using the Financial Performance and Stability outline.	*Pending financial audit
Sustainability Measures a) Total Margin b) Debt to asset ratio	School evaluates its Financial Sustainability using the Financial Performance and	The Financial Sustainability was reviewed by the	*Pending financial audit

	Stability outline provided by the Commission.	Commission using the Financial Performance and Stability outline.	
The school has an annual financial audit conducted. audit and management letter are submitted to the commission. audit has no material findings or misstatements.	Unmodified opinion on [consolidated] financial statements: no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies or reportable instances of noncompliance and other matters identified in the other information accompanying the auditor's report on financial statements or in the auditor's report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters.	The Board has engaged a firm to conduct the FY20 financial audit of the school. The Audit Report and Management Letter will be reviewed.	*Pending financial audit

**Once the FY20 financial audit is received and reviewed by the Maine Charter School Commission, an addendum updating Financial Performance and Sustainability will be issued.*

Section 10: Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Measure	Target	Results	
Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation.	The Governing Board will hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year.	The Governing Board held 12 meetings during the school year.	Exceeded
Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation.	Timely publication of Board meeting agendas and minutes upon approval.	Board meeting agendas and minutes were timely published.	Met

Section 11: Adequacy of Facilities Management

Measure	Target	Results	
Meet Local and State requirements	The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meet all local and state requirements for public school facilities.	The school certified that its facility (or facilities) meet all local and state requirements for public school facilities.	Met

Capital Improvement Plan	The school has a current capital improvement plan approved by its governing board.	The school has a current capital improvement plan approved by its governing board.	Met
--------------------------	--	--	-----

Section 12: School Social and Academic Climate

Measure	Target	Results	
Reporting of behavior incidents	The school will follow the Maine DOE required reporting for incidents of behavior.	The school reported incidents of behavior as required by Maine DOE.	Met
Panorama Survey- Family Participation	40% of families will participate in the Panorama survey.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Panorama Surveys were not administered during the 2019-20 school year.	NA
Panorama Survey- Student Participation	65% of eligible students will Participate in the Panorama survey.		NA
Panorama Survey- Teacher/Staff Participation	70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey.		NA
Panorama Survey	Annually, the school will review its spring Panorama Education results and develop an action plan for the following school year to address areas for continued improvement. Plan and outcome will be submitted to the Commission in September.	The school reviewed its Panorama Education survey results and developed an action plan to address areas for continued improvement and submitted the plan to the Commission in September 2019 as required.	Met

Section 13: Site Visit Report

Report on 7th Grade Pre-Opening Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences September 8, 2020

On August 18, 2020, Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) staff met via Zoom with members of the Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences' (FSAS) governing board, the Head of School, and staff members to review the school's pre-opening requirements for the new grade seven.

After a discussion of enrollment, educational programming, staffing, facility, and budget, MCSC staff believe the school is prepared to open for grade seven.

Maine Charter School Commission

Gina Post
Amy Allen
Bob Kautz

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences

Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Executive Director
Doug Lynch, Board Member
Bill Doughty, Board Chair
Kerry Loupe, 6th Grade Teacher
Lori Towle, Coord of Teaching & Learning
John Wensman, 7th Grade Teacher
Lee Ann Arnold, Special Education Director

Enrollment

The 7th grade currently has 14 students enrolled. The plan was based on 16 students. The school did have 15 enrolled, but a new student decided to go elsewhere (due to COVID circumstances).

Facility

FSAS got the official letter from USDA for purchasing the building which the school had previously shared with Fiddlehead Center. Fiddlehead Center owned it and sold it to FSAS. FSAS now has 15,000 square feet, which it is finding helpful for social distancing. The building has had some minor work done this summer (painting, floor polishing, etc.) and is ready for students.

FSAS reports the building is going to cost more in the first half of this school year, but in the second half of this year the cost of ownership will decrease greatly. The rate is 2.125% - locked in for 30 years.

Budget

FSAS reported that the budgetary impact of having 14 students in 7th grade instead of the anticipated 16 students is minimal. It was reported that when the school is fully enrolled with 20-21 students in each grade level PreK-8, the school's financial situation will improve. In the meantime, the school reports it has reserved funds to be prepared.

It was stated by FSAS that next year, school year '21-'22, will be a tough year financially because of the increase in staff this year (addition of teacher for the 5/6/7 team, school nurse, and Remote Learning Coordinator), which will add to the budget to fund next year. Adding 8th grade students next year will help to balance, but the anticipation of a reduction in state funding causes concern.

The MCSC team and FSAS team had a conversation about budgeting accordingly for the use of Coronavirus Relief Funds..

Educational Program

The previous Coordinator of Teaching & Learning has left FSAS and a new hire has taken the position. She has met with each of the grade 5-7 teachers and has been getting to know what their goals are how she can support them.

Last year the 5th and 6th grade teachers worked together as a multi-age group. The teachers are trying to increase the connectedness across grades, with a vision of grades 5-6 and grades 7-8 using a two-year looping curriculum. The teachers think this year they can continue some of that; however, each class is separated now by grade level for social distancing purposes. They hope to continue developing units and figure out how they best fit in a four-year sequence of literacy, math, science and history.

The new hire for the grades 5-7 team will be teaching math for grades 5, 6 and 7. FSAS wanted someone for this new classroom who would come in and be able to support students as they advance through the grade levels. This person has participated in the math program (Eureka) training this summer and he'll be starting off the school year establishing a growth mindset in math. The plan for next year, when 8th grade is added, is to hire another person with a math or science background and have two teams that are balanced.

The school is adapting the Work Sampling System (WSS) for its older students. FSAS likes the WSS because it reflects the accomplishments of the whole child and including the social emotional element.

FSAS has hired a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). The skills of the new LCSW are going to add great value to the team in supporting students through reentry during COVID-19 and throughout the year.

Speech and Occupational Therapist is in place (contracted services) and can accommodate the additional grade level. A teaching assistant will be shared at the upper grade levels, as compared to the lower grades where there is a TA for each class. An additional special education teacher is being hired. There will now be two special educators; one to serve the lower grades and one to serve the upper grades.

The school also has a ½ time Response to Intervention (RTI) Coordinator and has created, and hired for, the position of Remote Learning Coordinator (which will assist mostly upper grades).

Section 14: Mission and Vision Implementation Evidence and Results

(See Page 2 for School's Mission and Vision)

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching and learning. The school holds some fundamentals of the Reggio Approach as core to its program. By staying true to these fundamentals, the school remains true to its mission and vision.

- The image of the child – children are viewed as capable, curious and competent, active in the construction of knowledge and the pursuit of relationships. Students are the protagonists of their own learning.

- Children’s relationships and interactions within a system – children are seen in relation to their family, school, community and the larger society.
- The role of families – families are vital to their children’s learning and to the learning community. Family participation is invited and encouraged.
- The role of space – space encourages interaction, relationship and communication. The environment is considered “the third teacher”.
- Teachers and children as partners in learning – teachers are considered researchers and co-constructors of knowledge with the children. Collaboration is fostered between the children, teachers, parents and the community. Children assist each other in learning by taking on the role of teacher, and teachers take on the role of facilitator and learner.

Section 15: Commendations and Considerations

Commendations

- Fiddlehead has a record of high reenrollment and retention from one year to the next.
- The school stays true to its mission and vision, influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching and learning; evidence of this can be seen within the learning spaces as well as in the conduct of its governing board.
- The school has purchased the school building, which provides additional learning space.
- The school has responded to the covid-19 in a positive manner, maintaining meaningful contact with students and families.

Considerations

- As current board members begin to “term out,” the board should consider what skills and areas of expertise it should be looking for in new members.