



# Maine Connections Academy

8 Science Park Road, Floor #3, Scarborough, ME 04074



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2020-21  
October 2021



## 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

Amy Linscott, Board President

Jennifer Cummings, Board Treasurer

Billy Thompson, Board Secretary

Jana Lapoint, Board Member

John Larouche, Board Member

Ellen McBride, Board Member

## Administrative Team

Walter Wallace, Executive Director

Lauren Thompson, Dean of Students

Patricia Kiely, Special Education Director

## School Profile

Year Opened	Years in Operation	Grades served
2014	8	7 – 12
Number of Sending Districts*	Current Enrollment*	Students on Waiting List*
*(as of October 2021, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	*(as of October 2021, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	*(as of October 2020, Certified Student Enrollment Date)

School Year 2020 – 2021 Demographic Table			
Grade Level Enrollment			
	7	51	11%
	8	71	16%
	9	86	19%
	10	107	23%
	11	78	17%
	12	65	14%
Gender			
	Female	279	61%
	Male	179	39%
Race/Ethnicity			
	White	410	90%
	AI/Alaska Native	2	>1%
	Asian/PI	4	>1%
	BAA	14	3%
	Latino/Hispanic	7	2%
	Two or more races	21	5%
Special Education			
	Students with IEPs	74	16%
	General education students	384	84%
Economically Disadvantaged			
	Yes	181	40%
	No	277	60%

## Executive Summary

The Maine Charter School Commission is the Authorizer of 10 charter districts. Each charter district holds a contract with the Commission containing a Performance Framework of indicators and targets the district shall meet. The charter districts are evaluated and reported on annually as required by law.

District data are gathered through the Maine Department of Education, Charter Districts, and Site Visits, as applicable.

Maine Connections Academy was not on cycle to have a Site Visit at the end of the 2020-21 school year. 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](#). Charter Districts that are scheduled for “Document Review Only” are required to submit the same documentation as schools that will receive an in-person visit. Key documents and other information reviewed to determine progress on the school’s performance framework and alignment with its mission are as follows:

- School calendar
- Current enrollment and demographics
- Staff roster
- Current organizational chart
- Board meeting minutes
- Board member meeting attendance
- School’s strategic plan [as applicable]
- Current Education Service Provider contract [as applicable]
- Professional Development calendar and agendas [as applicable]
- Staff evaluation tool
- Administrator evaluation tool used by governing board
- Panorama school climate survey results
- School’s self-assessment
- Previous year’s monitoring report [as applicable]
- School’s performance framework
- Copies of current recruitment materials
- Student enrollment application

Maine Connections Academy had success with student enrollment throughout the school year, student re-enrollment from one year to the next, and school climate survey participation.

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 district’s report and data submission completion throughout the 2020-2021 school year.



As a result of the 2020-2021 monitoring process, the charter district is encouraged to consider the following:

## FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The governing board needs to develop a process for long-term strategic and financial planning so that it is a consistent agenda item at board meetings and focuses the board's attention to long-term sustainability and excellence.
- School and Board should review how FY21 COVID relief funding was spent and be sure that FY22 budgets do not rely on a repeat of this funding.

## ACADEMIC GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

- Given the impact of the pandemic and lower academic growth than in previous years, the charter organization should develop clear and specific strategies for closing learning gaps to ensure students are prepared for rigorous academic work.

**School performance should be considered in the context of a global health crisis, which schools were battling throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year.** Students and families grappled with job loss, health concerns and insecurities, and anxiety related to the pandemic. Schools continued to serve students and families despite the COVID-19 crisis. That service often meant that schools focused on the basic needs of students like social-emotional well-being and psychological health while also managing a rigorous academic program. Because of the operational challenges that the pandemic caused, the school likely saw less growth in student achievement than they otherwise might in a pandemic-free environment. All schools faced similar challenges which is why there is a broad focus on learning loss in the educational ecosystem and media. The Charter Commission is closely monitoring academic progress throughout the school year. The Charter Commission applauds the effort of the school to ensure a safe environment for students in which their basic needs were met during the 2020 - 2021 school year.

In the 2020-2021 school year, the Maine Department of Education adopted the NWEA MAP test as the “state assessment.” The MDOE did not assign targets or expectations related to assessment results. The Maine Charter School Commission amended the Performance Framework to require schools to submit results along with analysis. The MDOE has not released MAP data for traditional schools, which precludes the ability of the public to compare performance between charter schools and their traditional counterparts. Given the trajectory of the school’s performance over the last several years, the Charter Commission remains confident in the ability of the school to serve its students and families in accordance with the contract between the parties.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS SUMMARY TABLE		
Indicator	Details	Performance
Academic Proficiency		
Proficiency on state assessment in reading	Collect baseline data on the MAP test for ELA and will provide school wide results as well as results at each grade level assessed	School collected baseline data on the NWEA MAP test for ELA and provided school wide results as well as results at each grade level
Proficiency on state assessment in math	Collect baseline data on the MAP test for math and will provide school wide results as well as results at each grade level assessed	School collected baseline data on the NWEA MAP test for math and provided school wide results as well as results at each grade level
Academic Growth		
Growth in English Language Arts, reading and communication skills	Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each year	<b>59%</b>
Growth in mathematics and reasoning skills	Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their MAP RIT <sup>1</sup> scores from fall to spring of each year	<b>70%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The RIT score represents a student’s achievement level at any given moment and help measure their academic growth over time. The RIT scale is a stable scale, like feet and inches, that accurately measures student performance, regardless of age, grades, or grade level.

Growth on MAP <sup>2</sup> assessment	64% of eligible <sup>3</sup> students meeting their projected growth on NWEA ELA reading and language by the end of school year 2020-2021	<b>51%</b>
Growth on MAP assessment	66% of eligible <sup>4</sup> students meeting their projected growth on NWEA math by the end of school year 2020-2021	<b>63%</b>
<b>Achievement Gaps</b>		
Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups on the Maine State Assessments.	The school will provide evidence of closing identified achievement gaps on major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities)	Partially Meets Expectation: Subgroups are performing below comparison groups, some gaps have closed since the previous year
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)	Partially Meets Expectation: Subgroups are performing below comparison groups, some gaps have closed since the previous year
<b>Student Attendance</b>		
Chronic absenteeism rate	10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school <sup>5</sup>	<b>9.7%</b> Meets Expectation
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades K-8 of 93% or higher	<b>97.3%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 97% or higher
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades 9-12 of 91% or higher	<b>96.4%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 95% or higher
<b>Student Enrollment</b>		
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 <sup>6</sup>	<b>90%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 90% or more
Recurrent enrollment from one year to the next	85% or more of eligible students enrolled on the <u>last day</u> of school will have completed an Intent to Reenroll form for the next year	<b>88%</b> Meets Expectation: 85% - 89.9%
<b>Post-Secondary Readiness</b>		
4-year high school graduation rate (current cohort)	Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 87.74%	<b>68.7%</b> Partially Meets Expectation: More than 2% increase from previous year
5 and 6-year average high school graduation rate (previous 2 years' cohorts averaged)	Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 89.74%	<b>Pending MDOE</b>
Of students in their graduating year, percent participation in post-secondary readiness opportunities	At the end of their graduating year, 70% of each schools' eligible <sup>7</sup> students will have participated in at least one post-secondary activity such as ( <u>and not limited to</u> ) college course, Advanced Placement course, certificate program, or internship	<b>100%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 80% or more
Success rate of students participating in post-secondary readiness	70% of the school's students <u>who participated in at least one post-secondary activity</u> such as ( <u>and not limited to</u> ) college course, Advanced Placement	<b>96%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 80% or more

<sup>2</sup> MAP® Growth™ measures what students know and informs what they're ready to learn next. By dynamically adjusting to each student's responses, MAP (measures of academic progress) Growth creates a personalized assessment experience that accurately measures performance.

<sup>3</sup> Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in Grades K-11.

<sup>4</sup> Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades K-10.

<sup>5</sup> Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

<sup>6</sup> State Student Count Day is October 1.

<sup>7</sup> Students not excluded via IEP or other individual plan

	course, certification program, or internship will complete it successfully <sup>8</sup>	
<b>Financial Performance and Stability</b>		
<b>Near Term Measures</b> 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	<b>Pending Audit</b>
<b>Sustainability Measures</b> a) Total Margin b) Debt to asset ratio	School evaluates its Financial Sustainability using the Financial Performance and Stability outline provided by the Commission	<b>Pending Audit</b>
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	<b>Pending Audit</b>
<b>Board Governance and Stewardship</b>		
Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation	The Governing Board will hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year <sup>9</sup>	<b>12 meetings held</b> Exceeds Expectation: 11 or more meetings
	Timely <sup>10</sup> publication of Board meeting agenda and minutes upon approval	<b>Meets Expectation:</b> posted timely
<b>Facilities Management</b>		
Meet Local and State requirements	The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meets all local and state requirements for public school facilities	<b>Meets Expectation:</b> Certified as required
Capital Improvement Plan	The school has a current Capital Improvement Plan approved by its governing board	<b>Meets Expectation:</b> Capital Improvement Plan approved by board
<b>School culture and climate</b>		
Reporting of behavior incidents	The school will follow the Maine DOE required reporting for incidents of behavior	<b>Meets Expectation:</b> Reports as required
Panorama Survey-Family Participation	40% of families will participate in the Panorama survey	<b>53%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 50% or more
Panorama Survey-Student Participation	65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey <sup>11</sup>	<b>83%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 75% or more
Panorama Survey-Teacher/Staff Participation	70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey	<b>100%</b> Exceeds Expectation: 80% or more
Panorama Survey	Annually, the school will review its Panorama Education results and develop an action plan to address areas for continued improvement. Plan and outcome will be submitted to the Commission	<b>Plan Submitted</b> Meets Expectation

<sup>8</sup> Successfully is defined as a passing grade, meeting appropriate standards, or other clearly defined measure of success.

<sup>9</sup> A school year is July 1 – June 30

<sup>10</sup> Timely is defined as posting agenda a minimum of 5 days before the meeting and for minutes, posting within 5 days of approval.

<sup>11</sup> Students in grades 3 and up are eligible to participate in the Panorama Education surveys.

Reports will be updated once pending data is received.