



Maine Virtual Academy

6 East Chestnut Street, Suite 230, Augusta, ME 04330



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2020-21
October 2021



Mission

Maine Virtual Academy's (MeVA) mission is to develop each student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high-quality learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of alternative educational options. MeVA will develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs.

Vision

MeVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will improve student learning outcomes through individualized instruction, as evidenced by student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction. MeVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education and career opportunities. Our graduates will be prepared for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities.

Governing Board

Donna Pelletier, Board President
Peter Mills, Board Secretary
Ed LeBlanc, Board Treasurer

Amy Carlisle, Board Member
Nicholas Gannon, Board Member

Leadership Team

Dr. Melinda Browne, Head of School & Special
Education Administrator

Stephanie Emery, Program Manager of Operations
Donald Fournier, Academic Administrator

School Profile

| Year Opened | Years in Operation | Grades served |
|--|--|---|
| 2015 | 7 | 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 20201, Certified Student Enrollment Date) |

| School Year 2020 – 2021 Demographic Table | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Grade Level Enrollment | | | |
| | 7 | 53 | 12% |
| | 8 | 77 | 18% |
| | 9 | 73 | 17% |
| | 10 | 82 | 19% |
| | 11 | 74 | 17% |
| | 12 | 71 | 17% |
| Gender | | | |
| | Female | 231 | 54% |
| | Male | 199 | 46% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| | White | 383 | 89% |
| | AI/Alaska Native | 6 | 1% |
| | BAA | 10 | 2% |
| | Latino/Hispanic | 12 | 3% |
| | Two or more races | 17 | 4% |
| | Asian/Pacific Islander | 2 | >1% |
| Special Education | | | |
| | Students with IEPs | 68 | 16% |
| | General education students | 362 | 84% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | | | |

| | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Yes | 242 | 56% |
| No | 188 | 44% |

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.

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](#). Maine Virtual Academy was on cycle to have a Site Visit at the end of the 2020-21 school year and the Site Visit Report can be found on page 14.

Key documents and other information reviewed to determine progress on the charter district’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 Virtual Academy had success with student enrollment throughout the school year, student re-enrollment from one year to the next, facilities management, and school climate survey participation. As mentioned above, 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 ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH

- 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 | The school will collect baseline data on the NWEA 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 | The school will collect baseline data on the NWEA 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 ELA and provided school wide results as well as results at each grade level |
| Academic Growth | | |
| ELA MAP Growth | Students will show growth on ELA MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year | 47% |
| Math MAP Growth | Students will show growth on Math MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year | 67% |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Growth on MAP ¹ ELA assessment | 70% of eligible ² students meet projected growth on MAP ELA by the end of school year 2020-2021. | 39% |
| Growth on MAP Math assessment | 70% of eligible ³ students meet projected growth on MAP math by the end of school year 2020-2021. | 54% |
| Achievement Gaps | | |
| Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups on the Maine State Assessments. | School provides 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 MAP | School provides 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 |
| Student Attendance | | |
| Chronic absenteeism rate | 10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school ⁴ | 10.6% Partially Meets Expectation: 10.1%-13% |
| Average Daily Attendance Rate | Average daily attendance rate in grades PreK-8 of 93% or higher | 98.7% Exceeds Expectation: 97% or higher |
| Average Daily Attendance Rate | Average daily attendance rate in grades 9-12 of 91% or higher | 95.3% Exceeds Expectation: 95% or higher |
| Student Enrollment | | |
| 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 ⁵ . | 90% 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. | 94% Exceeds Expectation: 90% or more |
| Post-Secondary Readiness | | |
| 4-year high school graduation rate (current cohort) | Meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 87.74% | 69.7% Partially Meets Expectation: More than 2% increase from previous year |
| 5 and 6-year average high school graduation rate (previous 2 years' cohorts averaged) | Meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 89.74% | Pending MDOE |

¹ 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.

² Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades K-11.

³ Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades K-10.

* Subgroups must have at least 10 students to be reported. Subgroups may not be combined to create a "super-subgroup."

⁴ Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

⁵ State Student Count Day is October 1.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Of students in their graduating year, percent participation in post-secondary readiness opportunities | At the end of their graduating year, 70% of each school's eligible ⁶ students will have participated in at least one post-secondary activity such as (and not limited to) college course, Advanced Placement course, certificate program, or internship. | 100% 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 (and not limited to) college course, Advanced Placement course, certification program, or internship will complete it successfully ⁷ . | 100% Exceeds Expectation: 80% or more |
| Financial Performance and Stability | | |
| 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. | Pending Audit |
| Sustainability Measures a) Total Margin b) Debt to asset ratio | School evaluates its Financial Sustainability using the Financial Performance and Stability outline provided by the Commission. | Pending Audit |
| 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. | Pending Audit |
| Board Governance and Stewardship | | |
| Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation. | The Governing Board will hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year ⁸ . | 12 meetings held Exceeds Expectation: 11 or more meetings |
| | Timely ⁹ publication of Board meeting agenda and minutes upon approval. | Meets Expectation: All minutes and agendas posted timely |
| Facilities Management | | |
| Meet Local and State requirements | The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meets all local and state requirements for public school facilities. | Meets Expectation: Certified as required |
| Capital Improvement Plan | The school has a current Capital Improvement Plan approved by its governing board. | Meets Expectation: Current Capital Improvement Plan approved by board |
| School culture and climate | | |
| Reporting of behavior incidents | The school will follow the Maine DOE required reporting for incidents of behavior. | Meets Expectation: Reports as required |
| Panorama Survey-Family Participation | 40% of families will participate in the Panorama survey. | 52% Exceeds Expectation: 50% or more |

⁶ Students not excluded via IEP or other individual plan

⁷ Successfully is defined as a passing grade, meeting appropriate standards, or other clearly defined measure of success.

⁸ A school year is July 1 – June 30

⁹ Timely is defined as posting agenda a minimum of 5 days before the meeting and for minutes, posting within 5 days of approval.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Panorama Survey-Student Participation | 65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey ¹⁰ . | 72% Meets Expectation: 65% - 74.9% |
| Panorama Survey-Teacher/Staff Participation | 70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey. | 100% 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. | Meets Expectation Plan submitted as required |

Reports will be updated once pending data is received

¹⁰ Students in grades 3 and up are eligible to participate in the Panorama Education surveys.

Site Visit Report

Monitoring Site Visits are based on both the criteria set forth in the school's performance framework and the school's alignment with its mission. The categories in the performance framework are student achievement, school climate and family engagement, governance, and finance.

The monitoring site visit was conducted on August 9, 2021, via Zoom. Team members used the Site Visit Manual to plan for and conduct the visit. Prior to the site visit, team members reviewed documents and other information related to the school's mission and performance framework.

The following participants from the Maine Charter School Commission conducted the monitoring site visit:

- Jeremy Jones, Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Gina Post, Chief Program Officer, Maine Charter School Commission
- Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Mackenzie Wagner, Chief of Staff, Maine Charter School Commission
- Colette Sullivan, Maine Department of Education, Special Services

Focus group interviews were held with groups at the school. Groups were asked a standard set of questions as well as school specific questions created for this visit.

Focus group interviews held by the team:

- Governing Board: Donna Pelletier, Board Chair and Peter Mills, Board Member
- School leaders/administrators: Dr. Melinda Browne, Executive Director, Donald Fournier, Academic Administrator, and Lena Vitagliano, Special Education Director

Mission Alignment

Overall, Maine Virtual Academy demonstrated the school is upholding the mission outlined in its charter.

Administrators

Maine Virtual Academy (MeVA) was founded to provide an alternative to students who need flexibility provided by virtual education. To increase this flexibility and student outcomes, MeVA recently created enhanced learning opportunities, such as free summer school and credit recovery opportunities.

Student Achievement

Maine Virtual Academy is working toward improving student outcomes, particularly in mathematics, using MAP assessment data and providing opportunities for students in summer school and credit recovery courses.

Governing Board

The Governing Board representatives reported receiving frequent updates on student academic achievement from the Executive Director.

The board is pleased to use the NWEA MAP assessment three times per year and an emphasis has been placed on measuring student academic growth. The board is particularly interested in seeing increased growth in high school math. MeVA's schedule now includes math and ELA every day for students.

Administrators

The school administrative team has been pleased with staff retention and the hiring of new personnel. A hiring committee conducts interviews with candidates. The Executive Director works closely with the Governing Board on recruitment goals and provides regular updates to the board.

A recent change at MeVA is the addition of a lab science course at each grade level. Lab science will also be a graduation requirement.

Beginning this school year, MeVA is moving away from *Stride* curriculum and learning management system (LMS). The MeVA team engaged in a collaborative process to select curricula, which included a demonstration and review period by teachers who made recommendations based on standards alignment and differentiated elements. The teachers selected, and the Board approved, Accelerate for science and SAVVAS for math and English. The administration believes the new curriculum will provide for better labs, which will be both virtual and hands-on. To supervise MeVA's course development and implementation, MeVA hired a Curriculum Coordinator to work in conjunction with our Academic Administrator. MeVA plans to monitor students' progress/experience within the new courses in conjunction with their performance on the NWEAs and other state assessments.

MeVA's math Department put together a template during the last school year that will be used as an exemplar for other departments. It includes student level details that are indicators of academic performance such as:

- Grades
- Attendance
- Assignments (on time or late)

MeVA has intervention programs and processes in place for its students. Student grades, attendance, and engagement are monitored and discussed at grade level meetings. Individual meetings with teachers are held when needed. If there is concern for a student, the parent is notified. Students are provided supports and are referred for a 504 plan or for special education evaluation when appropriate.

Students who are being supported before referral for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are monitored closely and a meeting is held every 2 weeks to discuss progress. Students who are not identified for an IEP may be provided a "Back on Track Plan," help session(s), or the support of a Family Academic Support Liaison (FASL).

The Intervention Process is published in both the Student Handbook and the Employee Handbook. There are also Section 504 and Special Education manuals.

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, MeVA has moved to Brightspace for its LMS. It has also chosen other options for the provision of financial management, technology support and hardware, and course curricula, as noted above. In addition to cost savings, this shift was made to accommodate more opportunities for a varied source of curricula, which the administration believes is a way to improve student academic outcomes.

School Climate and Family Engagement

The site visit showed evidence that MeVA is prioritizing a collaborative and supportive school climate where staff feel heard and encouraged.

Administrators

MeVA's administrative team described the school as teacher-led. Staff are involved in a weekly meeting (Process Improvement). They also indicated the work being done to eliminate Stride, Inc. as sole source for curriculum was teacher driven.

Teacher coaching, evaluation and support for teachers and staff at MeVA include weekly meetings between the teacher and the Academic Administrator or the Director of Special Education (for special education staff). These meetings were described as a place to bring up any problems a teacher may be having. Formal observations with write ups are conducted in both fall and spring.

Teachers are given an opportunity to provide feedback through surveys throughout the year and at the end of the school year with the MCSC sponsored Panorama Surveys.

Governance

Governing Board

One board member resigned from the MeVA Board at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. A new board member with high school technical and vocational training has been recently appointed to the board. There have been discussions about appointing a parent representative to the board.

Annually, the board evaluates the Executive Director. The board discusses the evaluation with the Executive Director in executive session and sets goals for the coming year.

Governing Board members complete a survey annually as part of a board self-evaluation, which is followed by analysis to develop board goals.

Finance

MeVA now has more control over its finances, having amended its contract with Stride, Inc. and hired local personnel for financial management and services.

Governing Board and Executive Director

One benefit of Maine Virtual Academy's new learning platform, finances, curricula, and technology is cost savings. With the funding not used in these areas, there are plans to increase teaching staff to provide smaller class sizes and support for students, including one-on-one support, creating more personalized education for all students, and hiring a Technology Coordinator, hiring a Curriculum Coordinator. There will also be a review of teacher salaries which may result in increases of MeVA's salaries in order to be competitive with local schools.