



# VISION

MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL  
COMMISSION

All of Maine's children will have access to a vibrant ecosystem of diverse schools so that all of them can become happy, healthy and thriving citizens

## ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2021-22 November 2022



# ACADIA ACADEMY

*A Charter Academy for Developing Independence & Achievement*

*12 Westminster Street, Lewiston, ME 04240*

**MISSION**

ACADIA, A Charter Academy for Developing Independence and Achievement, will provide a rigorous, comprehensive educational program for children of the Lewiston/Auburn area in grades PreK through 6<sup>th</sup>. ACADIA will promote high educational achievement through direct teaching opportunities that are entwined with extensive experiential learning opportunities. ACADIA faculty and staff will support the development of the whole child as each student develops academically, socially, and emotionally in a safe community that requires personal accountability and meaningful participation. It is our intent to support our individual students in developing their full potential while teaching them the value of belonging, connectedness, and contribution to our larger community.

**VISION**

ACADIA, A Charter Academy for Developing Independence and Achievement, will provide for a unique and innovative educational experience. ACADIA students will fully participate within our learning community, experiencing rigorous daily instruction comprised of carefully selected curricula to allow for academic acceleration, small group interaction, and meaningful application. Authentic, relevant experiential activities will provide critical opportunities for our students to grasp real-world application of concepts and skills, through the delivery of multi-modal learning opportunities that are necessary to meet the learning preferences of our students. Our students will be challenged to meet high expectations for academic performance, social and emotional competence, and demonstrate evidence of commitment to their community. We expect students to embrace high standards of personal accountability and commitment to their personal learning journey through innovative projects of self-study and interest.

**GOVERNING BOARD**

Amy Dieterich, President  
Sean Siebert, Vice President  
Chris Brann, Treasurer  
Victoria Stanton, Secretary

Donald Dearborn  
Julie McCabe  
Sean Bushway  
Danielle Moreau  
Azenaide Pedro  
Justin Good

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Casey Baugher, Executive Director  
Emily Giorgetti, Special Education Coordinator  
Tracy Turner, Facilities Manager

**SCHOOL PROFILE**

School Year Opened	Years in Operation	Grades served
2016-17	7	Pre-K through 6th
Number of Sending Districts*	Current Enrollment*	Students on Waiting List*
*(as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	247 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	13 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)

School Year 2021 – 2022 Demographic Table		
Grade Level Enrollment		
PK	32	12.5%
K	32	12.5%
1	32	12.5%
2	31	12.1%
3	33	12.9%
4	41	16.1%
5	28	10.9%
6	27	10.5%
Gender		
Female	131	51.2%
Male	125	48.8%
Race		
White	239	93.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.4%
Black or African American	11	4.3%
Latino/Hispanic	1	0.4%
Two or more races	2	0.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0.8%
Special Education		
Students with IEPs	56	21.9%
General education students	200	78.1%
Other		
Yes	60	23.4%
No	196	76.6%

## Executive Summary

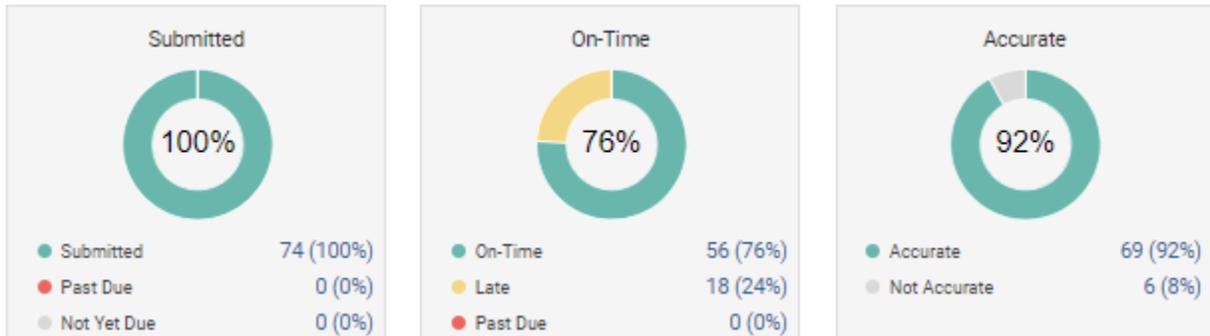
The Maine Charter School Commission is the authorizer of ten charter districts. Each charter district holds a contract with the Commission containing a Performance Framework of indicators and targets the district shall meet to continue operating in Maine. The charter districts are evaluated annually as required by state statute. 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](#). ACADIA Academy was on cycle to have a Site Visit at the end of the 2021-22 school year and the Site Visit Report can be found on page 6. 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 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

In school year 2021-2022, ACADIA Academy continued to see success with student enrollment throughout the school year, student re-enrollment from one year to the next, and board governance.

Document review is a primary tool for the Charter Commission to enforce expectations and ensure charter holders are within compliance of the law. The table below summarizes the charter district's report and data submission completion throughout the 2021-2022 school year.



As a result of the 2021-2022 monitoring process, the charter district is encouraged to consider the following:

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT**

- Student attendance continues to be low at ACADIA Academy, with a significant increase in chronic absenteeism in the 2021-2022 school year. The school is encouraged to develop a plan for increasing family and student awareness of the importance of attendance.

### **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH**

- Given the impact of the pandemic on academic growth, ACADIA Academy should develop clear and specific strategies for closing learning gaps to ensure students are prepared for rigorous academic work, particularly in the area of math.
- Acadia Academy should continue to explore opportunities for strengthening the experiential learning part of its program.

### **GOVERNING PRACTICES**

- The governing board is encouraged to develop a process for long-term strategic and financial planning.

### **SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

- The school should continue to prioritize attracting and retaining quality Instructors, as staff turnover is likely impacting student achievement negatively.

### **FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY**

- ACADIA Academy has prepared a 3-year financial plan. We suggest that this plan be stressed to develop pathways through possible strains and challenges as part of long term planning.
- Without substantial enrollment growth, the board should be aware that philanthropy becomes more urgent.
- ACADIA Academy should continue to develop its staff to take over functions now performed by the education service provider, which may result in savings and improved functionality.

Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Partially Met Expectation	Did Not Meet Expectation
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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUMMARY TABLE		
INDICATOR	DETAILS	PERFORMANCE
<b>Academic Proficiency</b>		
Proficiency on State Assessments in reading	The school will collect baseline data on the MAP test for ELA and will provide school-wide results as well as results at each grade level assessed.	Met Expectation <i>Reported as Required</i>
Proficiency on State Assessments in math	The school will collect baseline data on the MAP test for math and will provide school-wide results as well as results at each grade level assessed.	Met Expectation <i>Reported as Required</i>
Proficiency on the spring administration of the Brigance	75% of PreK students will score at or above the cut-off score for their age bracket on spring testing.	Exceeded Expectation 100%
<b>Academic Growth</b>		
Growth in English Language Arts, reading and communication skills	PreK students will show growth on TSG <sup>1</sup> in ELA reading and language from fall to spring	Exceeded Expectation 97%
Growth in mathematics and reasoning skills	PreK students will show growth on TSG in math from fall to spring	Exceeded Expectation 100%
ELA MAP Growth	80% of students will show growth on ELA MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year	Did Not Meet Expectation 26%
Math MAP Growth	80% of students will show growth on Math MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year	Did Not Meet Expectation 32%
Growth on MAP <sup>2</sup> ELA assessment	65% of eligible <sup>3</sup> students meet projected growth on MAP ELA reading.	Did Not Meet Expectation 39%
Growth on MAP Math assessment	65% of eligible <sup>4</sup> students meet projected growth on MAP math.	Did Not Meet Expectation 31%
Growth on MAP <sup>5</sup> ELA assessment	65% of eligible <sup>6</sup> students meet projected growth on MAP ELA language.	Did Not Meet Expectation 31%
<b>Addressing Achievement Gaps</b>		
Achievement gaps between major subgroups on the Maine State Assessment*	School provides evidence of closing identified achievement gaps of major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities).	Partially Met Expectation: <i>Most subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups. The FRL subgroup had a performance gap in language use, and males performed lower in reading than females.</i>
Achievement gaps in growth between major subgroups on the NWEA.	School provides evidence of closing identified achievement gaps of major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities).	Partially Met Expectation: <i>Most subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups. The FRL subgroup had a performance gap in language use and males</i>

<sup>1</sup> Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment

<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.

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

<sup>5</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>6</sup> Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades K-11.

		<i>performed lower in reading than females.</i>
<b>Student Attendance</b>		
Chronic absenteeism rate	Schools has 10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school <sup>7</sup>	Pending MDOE
Average Daily Attendance Rate	School has an average daily attendance rate in grades PreK-8 of 93% or higher	Did Not Meet Expectation <b>89%</b>
<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>8</sup>	Exceeded Expectation <b>97%</b>
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 Re-enroll form for the next year	Exceeded Expectation <b>95%</b>
<b>Financial Performance and Stability</b>		
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 letters 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 internal control over financial reporting on compliance and other matters.	Pending Audit
<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> .	Exceeded Expectation <b>12 Meetings Held</b>
Timely <sup>10</sup> publication of Board meeting agenda and minutes upon approval.	Board meeting agenda and minutes were substantially posted as required.	Did Not Meet Expectation <i>3 or more not posted timely</i>
<b>Facilities Management</b>		
Meet Local and State requirements	The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meet all local and state requirements for public school facilities.	Met Expectation <i>Certified as required</i>
Capital Improvement Plan	The school has a current capital improvement plan approved by its governing board.	Did Not Meet Expectation <i>Capital Improvement Plan not current or not approved by board</i>
<b>School Culture and Climate</b>		
Reporting of behavior incidents	The school will follow the Maine DOE required reporting for incidents of behavior.	Did Not Meet Expectation <i>Did not report as required</i>
Panorama Survey-Family Participation	40% of families will participate in the Panorama survey.	Exceeded Expectation <b>70%</b>

<sup>7</sup> Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of school days

<sup>8</sup> State Student Count Day is October 1

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

<sup>10</sup> Timely means agenda is posted 5 or more days prior to meeting and minutes are posted within 5 days of approval

Panorama Survey-Student Participation	65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey <sup>11</sup> .	Exceeded Expectation 86%
Panorama Survey-Teacher/Staff Participation	70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey.	Partially Met Expectation 61%
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.	Not Applicable as an action plan was not required to be submitted during the 2021-22 school year.

*Report will be updated once pending data is received.*

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

- Gina Post, Interim Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Lana Ewing, Interim Chief Program Officer, Maine Charter School Commission
- Joe Drago, Financial Consultant, Maine Charter School Commission
- Leora Byras, Maine Department of Education Special Services
- Karlie Thibodeau, Maine Department of Education Special Services

The monitoring site visit was conducted on August 1, 2022 in hybrid format of both in person at ACADIA Academy and 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.

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: Amy Dieterich, Board Chair
- School Leadership: Casey Baugher, Head of School; Emily Giorgetti, Special Education Coordinator; and Tracy Turner, Facilities and Operations Director

## BOARD

### Mission

The governing board chairperson was asked to reflect on the school's mission. She explained the school's mission as educating the whole child through providing social-emotional and experiential opportunities.

The chairperson reported the school made great strides toward meeting its mission and is further strengthening outdoor learning and experiential learning. She reported the WINK projects (What I Need to Know) have been a strong starting point for students, though they have not been consistently implemented.

She also indicated that the past school year was the most difficult year the school has had, mostly due to challenges in keeping the school fully staffed due to COVID and due to the lack of a full-time executive director.

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

### Student Performance

The governing board chairperson was asked to reflect on student performance. She reported the school's new executive director presented to the board last week on student growth, which was not as strong as hoped.

The executive director added that specific grade levels continue to be a challenge. The leadership team is exploring ways to accelerate learning in the wake of loss during COVID.

Reading is reported as a consistent area of growth. NWEA RIT data reflects 48-60% of students meeting growth, depending on the grade level. Year to year growth was reported as disappointing. Math has been identified as an area for growth across grade levels. The leadership team is reflecting on other key data elements that may provide insight.

The NWEA MAP assessment is given in grades 2 through 6 three times per year. Data is used to inform instructional groupings. In Pre-k through grade 1, Teaching Strategies Gold and the Brigance are used to assess students. The school is currently considering other possible assessments for Pre-k. The school team reported that formative assessments happen throughout the year, including teacher-created unit assessments.

### Governance

The board chair explained that the transition of the new executive director into the role was done gradually over the last few months, with the leadership team continuing in place for a transition period while the executive director took on the role's responsibilities. The executive director reported feeling supported in taking on additional responsibilities, and appreciates that the former head of school makes herself available for support as needed.

At each board meeting there is an executive director report that includes upcoming events, staffing issues, school performance, etc.

During the 2021-2022 school year, two board members resigned, with both giving ample notice of their departure due to relocation and a busy schedule.

Two new members have joined the board. One is an educator at Bates College, as well as a parent of an ACADIA student. The other is a middle and elementary school educator. The board chairperson recruited both new members and reports there are still open seats available. She also reported the board is beginning to look at succession planning, as at least two long-time members will term out in a few years.

While it was reported that the board has not engaged in meaningful strategic planning, it is using the charter contract as a guiding document.

The board evaluates the school leader annually and is adjusting the process this year with the new executive director. The new process will have a check-in with the executive director in December to review progress toward goals and the formal evaluation will be done in June. Key measures/areas of focus include the performance framework, climate and culture of the school, and faithfulness and fulfillment of the charter.

The board evaluates itself annually using a survey that is completed by board members in November. The results are reviewed by the entire board. The board is participating in the MCSC training modules in Epicenter. New board members complete Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) training and receive a copy of the charter contract.

### Educational Service Provider (ESP) Relationship

Special services support is the bulk of the contract with the ESP, John F. Murphy. The contract also includes human resources and bookkeeping. For the past couple of years the school team has explored how to reduce

some of the support from the ESP. Information technology services were moved from the ESP to a new provider beginning with the 2021-22 school year.

### Finances

The board has developed a 3-year financial plan, but not an official strategic plan. The board's treasurer makes sure that expenditures are sustainable over the long-term.

The executive director participated in FY23 budget development. There was a heavy focus to respond to the Panorama Education school climate survey results and general concerns around school climate and teacher retention. The FY23 budget ensures classroom teachers are appropriately compensated and have funding for field trips and materials. The board is aware that staff turnover is impacting student achievement negatively. The school is focused on attracting and retaining quality instructors.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Staff

The executive director is new in the role and was asked to reflect on his initial diagnosis of organizational strengths and areas of growth. He reported that strengths include:

- Social emotional learning
- Strong relationships with students and families
- Financial stability over a multi-year period, particularly with the support of board members focused on finance.

The executive director reported that areas of growth include:

- School climate and culture
- Retaining high quality instructors
- A more diverse school that better represents the Lewiston community
- A comprehensive food program, which the school is currently pursuing.

The executive director reflected that there has been a drift in practice from the original mission of the school. The school is exploring the current success and future trajectory of using experiential learning as the core model. The school is committed to using restorative practices in the school community and has led staff professional development to improve practice in this area.

The team reported that the school is working to fill three open positions – two teachers and one teacher support role. They have used platforms such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and Facebook, among others, to post open positions. The school is also using lawn signs and the executive director is cultivating a relationship with Bates College to recruit potential staff members. The school is committed to investing in internal staff who have interest in full-time teaching roles.

The school has prioritized teacher retention, as a self-identified area of growth. In order to retain staff the school is pursuing:

- Summer programming in 2023
- Salaries competitive with the local school district (\$100,000 increase in staff salaries)
- Small class sizes
- Strategies to promote a stronger work/life balance
- Ensuring that meetings are professional and run on time.

The school team is in the process of revising the tools and systems for evaluating teachers and staff. They are developing a customized approach depending on the level of support required that utilizes consistent measures. For example, Heather Bucklin is conducting initial observations, the executive director joins for a

second observation to calibrate support, and then Heather Bucklin completes a final evaluation. The school reports having a comprehensive plan for teachers who are performing below expectations, and allocates additional professional development funds to support this group of educators.

The executive director and team reflected on the Panorama Survey results, which were low. The team noted that the results reflect concerns that were in place before the new executive director joined the school. The team believes that the data reflects decisions that the board made to the leadership structure at the beginning of the school year, realizing that there would be negative consequences as a result of those decisions. They attribute the low scores to a lack of clarity for staff and families about the school leadership and noted that hiring an executive director who decided not to join the school community lowered morale. The team also noted that school engagement is low across the board and that staff turnover may be reflected in student survey data.

In order to increase community satisfaction, the executive director touches base with staff every week and makes it a priority to be present in the school community. He is focused on leadership taking an active role in classroom instruction. Additionally, the board is exploring the use of more Panorama surveys to gauge the process of community satisfaction.

### Student Support

The Commission staff noted that there has been a significant increase in the school's rate of chronic absenteeism and asked the school to reflect on their plan to address it. The annual chronic absenteeism rates were:

- SY18-19: 9%
- SY19-20: 6%
- SY20-21: 16.8%
- SY21-22: 50.9%

The school team noted that the high chronic absenteeism percentage is due to COVID interruptions and how time spent not in school is coded. In addition to COVID, the school noted that there have been high absentee rates over the last two years due to influenza.

The school reports that they continued to do pool testing during the school year and that they were diligent about encouraging students to remain at home when they were ill.

The school team reflected that staff are noting the students who have had consistent disruptions that have impacted attendance and that they are considering possible interventions. The school reaches out to families daily when students are absent.

The school team reflected on how they support teachers to use data to inform instruction. They reported that they track a series of measures – for example, reading proficiency from multi-level groups. The leadership team reviews student data frequently and meets with staff to review the data in six-week cycles. They review different data points and ask themselves questions, such as: Are the data points aligning? If they are not, why not? Is it an assessment problem or a curriculum problem?

The team noted that teacher use of data to inform instruction is an identified area of growth in the school and that they had created a position to support teachers with using data. However, that role was reallocated to be on the Leadership Team and the focus of the position shifted. The leadership team has identified several classroom teachers whose students were not meeting growth and Corrective Action Plans have been put in place.

The school team was asked to reflect on the interventions or intervention programs used and how students are selected to participate in them. The team reported that their Tier I program is strong as it relates to universal groupings. Members of the leadership team identify students based on NWEA and classroom data

and teachers identify students who may be struggling. The team then creates an intervention plan and evaluates how well it is working throughout the year.

This past school year there were no new referrals identified throughout the school year. The school team noted that there were several teacher referrals for special education services throughout the year, but the students were deemed to not need an IEP, although several students have 504s. The school team confirmed that the school building is ADA compliant. The school team noted that they have a strong team of special educators and that two students were taken off of their IEPs this year. Interventions have started this summer with three teaching assistants teaching students three times per week.

The school team reported that the following student numbers are receiving academic intervention supports:

- SY21-22: 12 students
- SY22-23: 8 students, with one student in the evaluation process.

The school team reported that the following student numbers are identified for special education services:

- SY21-22 school year: 50 students.

