



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 December 2022



Creative Children's Academy, 48 South Factory Street, Skowhegan, ME 04976
Dimensions Academy, 1192 West Ridge Road, Cornville, ME 04976
Overman Academy, 78 Water Street, Suite 2, Skowhegan, ME 04976

Received by Commission on 1.10.23

MISSION

We are Community-Centered and Uncompromisingly Learner Focused. Community Regional Charter School creates a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment where everyone is accepted and celebrated. The CRCS provides a customized learning environment designed to allow every child to thrive socially, emotionally and academically through the integration of STEAM projects and community connections aimed at unlocking a passion for life-long learning.

VISION

To create a school where learning is built around each student so that they become engaged learners with relevant and challenging work.

GOVERNING BOARD

Danielle Denis, Chair
Kelly Lacasse
Nicki Reinholt
Seth Noonkester
Tonya Arnold
Charlie-Marie Hansen
Theresa Overall

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Travis Works, Executive Director
Tammy Wyman, Special Education Director
Susan Muzzy, Principal
Elizabeth Firnkes, Principal
Crystal Priest, Director of Special Projects

SCHOOL PROFILE

School Year Opened	Years in Operation	Grades served
2012-13	11	PK-12
Number of Sending Districts*	Current Enrollment*	Students on Waiting List*
18 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	358 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	5 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)

School Year 2021 – 2022 Demographic Table			
Grade Level Enrollment			
	PK	31	8.8%
	K	22	6.2%
	1	21	6%
	2	24	6.8%
	3	25	7.1%
	4	15	4.3%
	5	14	4%
	6	21	6%
	7	36	10.2%
	8	32	9.1%
	9	28	8%
	10	30	8.5%
	11	29	8.2%
	12	24	6.8%
Gender			
	Female	155	44%
	Male	197	56%
Race/Ethnicity			
	White	338	96%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.3%
	Black or African American	1	0.3%
	Latino/Hispanic	7	2%
	Two or more races	5	1.4%
Special Education			
	Students with IEPs	83	23.6%
	General education students	269	76.4%
Economically Disadvantaged			
	Yes	192	54.5%
	No	160	45.5%

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](#). Community Regional Charter School 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.

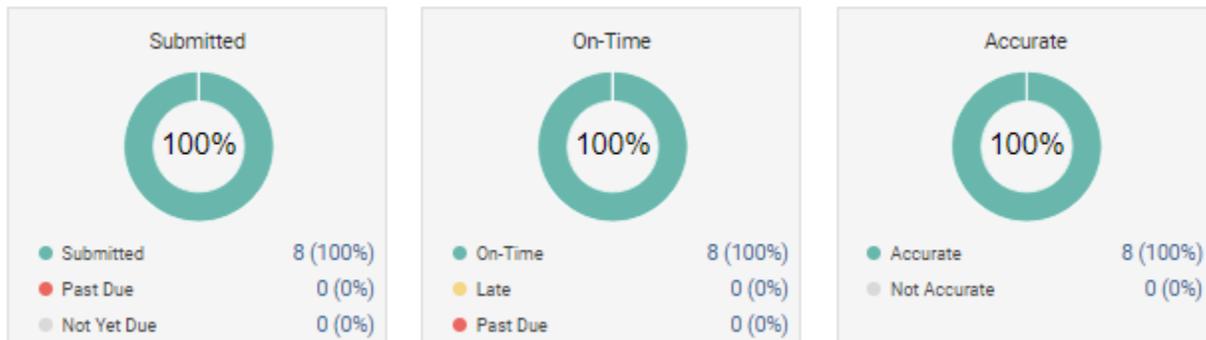
Key documents and other information reviewed to determine progress on the charter district's performance framework and alignment with its mission are as follows:

- 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

In school year 2021-2022, Community Regional Charter School continued to see success with student enrollment throughout the school year and student re-enrollment from one year to the next.

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 2021-22 school year.



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

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- Student attendance continues to be low at Community Regional Charter School, particularly at the high school level. The school is encouraged to use the engagement plan it developed and to make adjustments as necessary to increase family and student awareness of the importance of attendance.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH

- Given the impact of the pandemic on academic growth, Community Regional Charter School should develop clear and specific strategies for closing learning gaps to ensure students are prepared for rigorous academic work.

GOVERNING PRACTICES

- The governing board is encouraged to develop a process for operationalizing and monitoring progress toward meeting the goals set forth in its strategic plan.
- The board should continue to closely monitor the conditions that were put into place for renewal, as well as the additional Intervention targets.

FINANCE

- CRCS 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.
- In light of limited enrollment growth and increasing costs, we recommend a focus on positive net results, debt management, and philanthropy.
- Based on pre-audit reported results, CRCS is under the 30 days cash on hand lower limit and is encouraged to protect its bottom line.
- It is suggested that budgets not be prepared to show a zero net result. Some level of surplus is required for financial health and to meet Financial Performance Measures.

Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Partially Met Expectation	Did Not Meet Expectation
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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS SUMMARY TABLE		
INDICATOR	DETAILS	PERFORMANCE
Academic Proficiency		
Proficiency on State Assessments 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	Met Expectation <i>Reported as required</i>
Proficiency on State Assessments 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	Met Expectation <i>Reported as required</i>
Academic Growth		
Growth on school selected test in reading: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening	85% of PreK learners will show progress in identifying uppercase letters from fall to spring	Exceeded Expectation 100%
	85% of PreK learners will show progress in identifying lowercase letters from fall to spring	Exceeded Expectation 96%
	85% of PreK learners will show progress in identifying letter-sound identification from fall to spring	Exceeded Expectation 96%
Growth on school selected test in math (Elementary Mathematics Diagnostic Interview)	85% of learners will show progress on the EMDI PreK math assessment	Met Expectation 88%
Growth on school selected assessment for math (TSG-PreK)	85% of PreK learners will show progress in their learning through growth in their math TSG scores from fall to spring.	Not Applicable <i>School no longer administers this assessment</i>
Growth on school selected assessment for ELA reading and language arts (TSG-PreK)	85% of PreK learners will show progress in their learning through growth in their ELA reading and language TSG scores from fall to spring.	Not Applicable <i>School no longer administers this assessment</i>
Growth in English Language Arts, reading and communication skills.	80% of students will make growth in their MAP RIT scores from fall to spring of each year.	Partially Met Expectation 76%
Growth in mathematics and reasoning skills	80% of students will make growth in their MAP RIT ¹ scores from fall to spring of each year.	Partially Met Expectation 74%

¹ 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 ² assessment	65% of eligible ³ students in grades k-7 meeting their projected growth on MAP ELA reading and language by the end of school year 2021-22.	Partially Met Expectation 44%
Growth on MAP assessment	60% of eligible students in grades 8-12 meeting their projected growth on MAP ELA reading.	Partially Met Expectation 46%
Growth on MAP assessment	65% of eligible ⁴ students in grades k-7 meeting their projected growth on MAP math.	Did Not Meet Expectation 52%
Growth on MAP assessment	70% of eligible ⁵ students in grades 8-12 meeting their projected growth on MAP math.	Did Not Meet Expectation 32%
Growth on MAP ⁶ assessment	65% of eligible ⁷ students in grades k-7 meeting their projected growth on MAP ELA language.	Partially Met Expectation 45%
Growth on MAP assessment	60% of eligible students in grades 8-12 meeting their projected growth on MAP ELA language.	Partially Met Expectation 47%
Achievement Gaps		
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 Met Expectation <i>Most subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups. The IEP subgroup had a performance gap in reading and females performed lower in math than males.</i>
Achievement gaps in growth between major subgroups on the MAP	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 Met Expectation <i>Most subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups. The IEP subgroup had a performance gap in reading and females performed lower in math than males.</i>
Student Attendance		
Chronic absenteeism rate	10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school ⁸	Pending MDOE
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades K-8 of 93% or higher	Partially Met Expectation 91%
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades 9-12 of 91% or higher	Met Expectation 87%
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 ⁹	Met Expectation 88%

² 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.

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

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

⁵ Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades K-10.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in Grades K-11.

⁸ Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

⁹ State Student Count Day is October 1.

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	Exceeded Expectation 95%
Post Secondary Readiness		
4-year high school graduation rate (current cohort)	Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 87.74%	Pending MDOE
5 and 6-year average high school graduation rate (previous 2 years' cohorts averaged)	Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020 – 89.74%	Pending MDOE
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 ¹⁰ 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	Exceeded Expectation 100%
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 ¹¹	Did Not Meet Expectation 31%
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 ¹²	Exceeded Expectation <i>12 Meetings Held</i>
	Timely ¹³ publication of Board meeting agenda and minutes upon approval	Met Expectation <i>All minutes and agendas posted timely</i>
Facilities Management		
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>

¹⁰ Students not excluded via IEP or other individual plan

¹¹ Successfully is defined as a passing grade, meeting appropriate standards, or other clearly defined measure of success.

¹² A school year is July 1 – June 30

¹³ Timely is defined as posting agenda a minimum of 5 days before the meeting and for minutes, posting within 5 days of approval.

Capital Improvement Plan	The school has a current Capital Improvement Plan approved by its governing board	Met Expectation <i>Current Capital Improvement Plan approved by board</i>
School culture and climate		
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	Did Not Meet Expectation 29%
Panorama Survey-Student Participation	65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey ¹⁴	Exceeded Expectation 80%
Panorama Survey-Teacher/Staff Participation	70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey	Exceeded Expectation 90%
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

The monitoring site visit was conducted on August 11, 2022 in hybrid format of both in person at Community Regional Charter School (CRCS) 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: Danielle Denis, Board chairperson
- School Leadership: Travis Works, Executive Director; Crystal Priest, Technology Director/Special Projects; Elizabeth Firnkes, Building Administrator/Overman Academy; Susan Muzzy, Building Administrator/Dimensions & Creative Children's Academy; Tammy Wyman, Special Education Director; Jill Alves, Bookkeeper; Ashlee Savage, Administrative Assistant

¹⁴ Students in grades 3 and up are eligible to participate in the Panorama Education surveys.

BOARD

Mission

The governing board chairperson was asked to reflect on the school's mission. She described the school as a "learner centered, learner focused environment," with learning happening in a project-based environment.

Student Performance

The board chairperson identified challenges at CRCS as finding ways to fill in gaps in student learning in math, particularly at the high school level, and meeting the mission of being learner centered, while showing growth toward meeting academic targets. To address these challenges, the Academic Excellence Committee will be looking at NWEA MAP data to better understand student achievement.

In terms of academic strengths, she identified reading as an area that has seen notable improvement, adding that they are "not in a place to take our feet off the gas at this point."

In order to support academic needs, the board uses BoardOntrack to set board goals. One upcoming project is completing the executive director's evaluation and looking at academic performance goals. The board chairperson reported the board has discussed putting professional development funds in the budget to provide learning opportunities.

Governance

The board receives information regularly at its meetings. Staff presentations help board members understand assessment data. The board chairperson reflected that the board has always received the data, but didn't spend a lot of time with the results in the past. The board chairperson reported that she is frequently in communication with the executive director and has been moving toward more responsive instead of reactive communications. Recently, the board's work has prioritized:

- Conflict of Interest investigation
- Renewal process
- How does the board grow and be a competent board; working with BoardOnTrack to put together a more robust board onboarding process
- Making sure the board is using its time wisely.

Three new members recently joined the CRCS board. The board chairperson reported that most of the board members are engaged, although some are engaged at meetings there is not much communication between board meetings. There are currently eight board members; the board chairperson would like it to grow to eleven. The board is using BoardOnTrack to assess skills needed in new members and the board chairperson would like to add someone with prior board experience.

The most recent strategic plan is from 2017. In May, the strategic design was reviewed and work was done to begin revising and redesigning around the mission, vision, and guiding principles. The board and administration are focusing on two questions: "What are we all working toward?" and "Where do we see our kids in society in 20 years?" The next step will be to operationalize the strategic plan.

The board will evaluate the executive director this fall. The executive director will complete a survey and staff who report directly to the executive director will complete a survey. The board chairperson reported this is a new and more comprehensive process than what has been used in the past. Board members will also take a survey. The results will be on a platform where progress can be tracked easily. The result of the process will be three goals for the executive director.

A board evaluation was recently completed through a BoardOnTrack questionnaire. The executive director completed the questionnaire along with board members. Nearly all board members completed the questionnaire. The results will be analyzed and used to set board goals. The evaluation can be completed more than once a year. The board chairperson is considering bi-annual administration given the number of new members on the board.

The chronic absenteeism rate in school year 2021-2022 was much higher at the secondary level as compared to the elementary level (secondary 46%, elementary 27%). The board and administration reviewed absenteeism data and found two contributors to the higher secondary rate. The first was the high number of students who missed school due to quarantining; the other was an increase in mental health challenges.

In order to keep families informed about student attendance and absences, the school sends home monthly attendance audits. In addition, a separate communication is sent home when a student is getting close to being truant.

It was observed that attendance increased when the school was more engaged with families. As a result, the school has developed a family engagement plan.

Finances

The board chairperson reported that they are on-track with planning for this year's audit. A pre-audit was completed in June and a full audit will be done on August 15th. The board expects the audit to be completed by November 1st.

The team reflected on revenue sources and their impact on facility renovation and expansion. The school's enrollment goal for SY 2022-23 is 375 students. The team noted that their largest and most stable revenue source is enrollment. Their long-term goal is 450 students in PreK-12 grades, with an internal cap currently set at 500 students. They reported that 25-30 students unenrolled in August because of the requirement to wear masks and that they recognize a need for enrollment stabilization.

The team reports that they have the ability and plan to expand the Overman campus. The board is beginning a cost benefit analysis to determine if it makes more sense to spend funds to complete an additional 3,000 square feet basement renovation to the current facility or to find space elsewhere. The team noted that they have approximately \$4,000,000 to complete the 3,000 square foot renovation.

The team reported that the Dimensions campus likely either needs an addition or a new building. The board has asked the Finance Director to determine the enrollment needs of the organization to manage their debt responsibly.

The board chairperson was asked to reflect on their plan to use philanthropy and she noted that she is cognizant about grants that are available, but tries to determine whether the amount received would be worth the time that must be spent to generate and maintain the grant.

During the meeting, Joe Drago, from the MCSC, recommended the following:

- Increasing enrollment to support funding the facilities expansions/renovations
- Increase the level of details in the Board Meeting and Finance Committee Meeting minutes so that the Commission is able to understand the financial and facilities plans for CRCS
- Provide a version of the FY23 budget that includes supporting tabs and a list of items that are just capital expenditures.

ADMINISTRATION

Staff

The school team representatives were asked to reflect on how they recruit and retain high-quality personnel. They reflected that they have recently changed their hiring tactics to ensure that the staff hired have a strong alignment with the school's culture, climate and core values. They are periodically choosing to leave roles open rather than hire staff members about whom they have concerns. They noted that internal staff are aligned on this philosophy and that there is a "plan B" in place to start the school year if not all positions are hired.

The team noted that they currently recruit on [servingschools.com](https://www.servingschools.com), and have outreach channels at the University of Maine Farmington.

The school has taken a number steps to retain strong staff, including:

- Offering health benefits comparable to local school districts
- Offering a 403B with a school contribution
- Offering sick time to be taken by the hour (staff do not have to take time in half or full day periods)
- Empower staff to feel like leaders; for example, Leadership Meetings will be open to the entire staff
- Investing in professional development, including sending several staff members to the NWEA conference
- Investing in self-care.

The school team was asked to reflect on teacher support and evaluation systems. They report that they currently use Marzano as an evaluation system, but will use Empower as a tracking platform beginning this year. The evaluation will include the same standards and model, and the administration believes the new platform will be more beneficial. The school administrative team plans for staff to complete self-assessments and to use the combined evaluation data to group teachers and staff members who require the greatest level of support for additional development.

The team noted that there is a staff member at Dimensions who monitors teacher performance and supports them. The team reflected that the culture at CRCS is one of open dialogue about teachers' areas of growth and that staff are encouraged to be transparent about growth areas and seek help from administration and colleagues.

The administrative team reported that they have developed school goals based on the most recent staff, student and family Panorama Survey results.

Student Supports

The school team was asked to reflect on the effectiveness of student interventions. They noted multiple data points that they use to assess and progress monitor student performance, such as:

- IXL diagnostics given in the spring, with a plan to do so again in SY 2022-23)
- Fountas and Pinnell assessments for reading
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) with PK-2.

The team noted that these assessments are closely aligned with NWEA performance and that they are able to use them to better understand students' gains from winter to spring.

This year, the team has hired a new staff member to manage Title I, who will prioritize 6th and 7th grades for both math and reading, as the team is concerned about low growth in those grades. They will use recess time for facilitators to meet, which occurs in the morning when students arrive and play outside for 25 minutes.

The team expressed concern about the overall low math scores and detailed a plan for how to address that gap that includes classifying six separate math classes, adjusting power targets, and providing a more linear approach to teaching math.

The school team was asked to reflect on their process for identification and progress monitoring of students suspected of having a disability. They reported that they are confident in their current referral and documentation systems. The school team reviews all Child Find referrals and collects additional RTI data to support the referrals. They deploy staff flexibly to support the students when needs arise and contract with a school psychological examiner that provides academic testing.

Staff Communication

The school team reflected on their processes for communicating with staff. The executive director and principals share information and communicate with all staff members via regular email and in-person communication. The district leadership meetings are held once per month, and district-based professional learning communities (PLCs) are held regularly.

In addition to email and phone calls, CRCS will use the See-Saw app for communicating with families.

