



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



9 Ash Point Road, Harpswell, ME 04079

Received by Commission 1.10.23

MISSION

Our mission is to create an engaged community of creative thinkers, compassionate leaders, and effective problem solvers. Learning at HCA is project-based and place-based, grounding students in a purposeful exploration of the natural and human worlds. Our curriculum cultivates curiosity, integrity, and civic-mindedness and prepares students for post-secondary success, whether in college, technical training, or the workforce.

VISION

We envision HCA students and alumni as lifelong learners and champions of positive social change, economic opportunity, and sustainability in our towns, state, country, and world.

GOVERNING BOARD

Cynthia Shelmerdine, Board Chair
David Jean, Board Treasurer
Sally Mackenzie

Barbara Merson
Kathy Wilson

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Melaine Christensen-Fletcher, Interim Head of School
Amy Marx, Principal

Ashley Hyde, Business & Finance Director
Bonnie Violette, Special Education Director

SCHOOL PROFILE

School Year Opened	Years in Operation	Grades served
2013-14	10	5 – 12
Number of Sending Districts*	Current Enrollment*	Students on Waiting List*
22 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	171 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)	8 (as of October 2022, Certified Student Enrollment Date)

School Year 2021 – 2022 Demographic Table			
Grade Level Enrollment			
	5	14	7.6%
	6	19	10.3%
	7	27	14.7%
	8	21	11.4%
	9	15	8.2%
	10	21	11.4%
	11	31	16.8%
	12	36	19.6%
Gender			
	Female	95	51.6%
	Male	89	48.4%
Race/Ethnicity			
	White	173	94%
	Black or African American	5	2.7%
	Latino/Hispanic	4	2.2%
	Two or more races	2	1.1%
Special Education			
	Students with IEPs	54	29.3%
	General education students	130	70.7%
Economically Disadvantaged			
	Yes	44	23.9%
	No	140	76.1%

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.

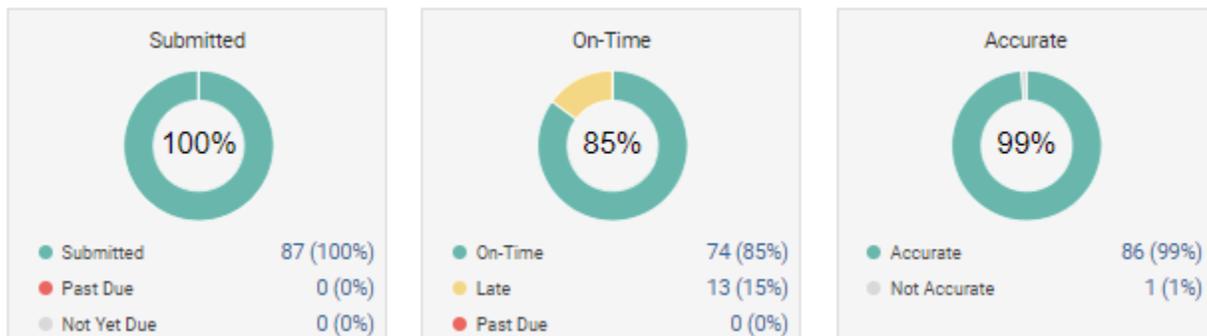
The Maine Charter School Commission has established a monitoring visit table for visit frequency and intensity. A copy of the Site Visit Manual can be found [here](#). Harpswell Coastal Academy was on cycle to have a Site Visit at the end of the 2021-22 school year and the Site Visit Report can be found on page 5.

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

Harpswell Coastal Academy had success with student enrollment throughout the school year, student re-enrollment from one year to the next, board governance, and facilities management.

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 2021-2022 school year.



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	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.	Met Expectation <i>Reported as required</i>
Proficiency on State Assessments 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.	Met Expectation <i>Reported as required</i>
Academic Growth		
Growth in English Language Arts, reading and communication skills	Growth in their MAP RIT ¹ scores from fall to spring of each school year	Did Not Meet Expectation 57%
Growth in mathematics and reasoning skills	Growth in their NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year	Partially Met Expectation 74%
ELA MAP Growth	65% of eligible ² students meeting their projected growth on NWEA ELA reading by the end of school year 2021-2022	Did Not Meet Expectation 45%
Math MAP Growth	65% of eligible students meeting their projected growth on NWEA math by the end of school year 2021-2022	Partially Met Expectation 59%
ELA MAP Growth	65% of eligible ³ students meeting their projected growth on NWEA ELA language by the end of school year 2021-2022	Did Not Meet Expectation 37%
Achievement Gaps		
Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups on the Maine State Assessments.	The school will provide evidence of closing identified achievement gaps of major subgroups (English learner, special education, gender, economically disadvantaged, 504, ethnic and racial minorities).	Met Expectation <i>Subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups</i>
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).	Met Expectation <i>Subgroups are performing similarly to comparison groups</i>
Student Attendance		
Chronic absenteeism rate	10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school ⁴ .	Pending MDOE
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades K-8 of 93% or higher.	Did Not Meet Expectation 86%
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance rate in grades 9-12 of 91% or higher.	Did Not Meet Expectation 84%

¹ The RIT score represents a student's achievement level at any given moment and helps 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.

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-11.

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

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 .	Met Expectation 88%
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 93%
Post-Secondary Readiness		
4 year high school graduation rate (current cohort)	Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals: 2020-21=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: 2020-21=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 ⁶ 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	Exceeded Expectation 89%
Success rate of students participating in post-secondary readiness opportunities	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, certificate program, or internship will complete it successfully ⁷	Exceeded Expectation 100%
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 on 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	Exceeded Expectation <i>11 Meetings Held</i>

⁵ State Student County Day is October 1.

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

	Timely ⁹ 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>
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	Exceeded Expectation 65%
Panorama Survey-Student Participation	65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey ¹⁰	Exceeded Expectation 79%
Panorama Survey-Teacher/Staff Participation	70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey	Exceeded Expectation 83%
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.	Even though not required for the 2021-22 school year, the school developed an action plan.

Report will be updated once pending data is received.

Site Visit Report

HARPSWELL COASTAL ACADEMY

Renewal Site Visit Report

September 28, 2022

Monitoring Site Visits are based on the criteria set forth in the school's performance framework and the school's alignment with its mission.

The monitoring site visit was conducted on September 14, 2022, via Zoom. Team members used the Site Visit Manual to plan for and conduct the visit. Prior to the site visit, team members reviewed the renewal application, reports, documents and other information related to the school's mission and performance framework.

The following participants conducted the monitoring site visit:

- Gina Post, Interim Executive Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Amy Allen, Operations Director, Maine Charter School Commission
- Joe Drago, CPA Consultant, Maine Charter School Commission
- Clare Vickland, Consultant, Maine Charter School Commission

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

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

Focus group interviews were held with students, staff, and parents/guardians. 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:
 - Cynthia Shelmerdine, Board Chair
 - Kata Ritenburg, Board Member
 - David Jean, former Board Treasurer
- School admin team:
 - Mel Christensen-Fletcher, Interim Head of School
 - Amy Marx, Principal
 - Bonnie Violette, Special Education Director
- 7 students from various grade levels
- 8 parents representing students from various grade levels and years of enrollment
- 13 staff representing a variety of grade levels and subject areas

School Culture

All stakeholder groups articulated that the strong school culture at Harpswell Coastal Academy is a unique and important aspect of the school. Teachers named that the pre-opening training modeled relationship building and created a strong foundation for students. Students shared that they know who to go to get help and that they feel supported and valued by their teachers. Students and teachers identified that students have agency in what they learn and when they learn it. Crew time and restorative justices were identified as structures that reinforce this strong culture.

Families indicated that the culture of the school is the most important aspect of the school, in their perspective, and praised the school's ability to meet the mental health and social emotional needs of their children compared to their children's previous school environments.

Academic Outcomes

The governing board reported that they will use a systematic process for increasing the amount of information they receive about absenteeism, student interventions, and engagement. They also acknowledged that these have been areas of concern in the past and would like to monitor these metrics more consistently.

Administration expressed confidence in their new team, which includes a long-time teacher at the school, as well as an experienced principal and special education director joining the leadership team. The new staff plan to focus on alignment of assessments and interventions to address academic gaps. In addition, they plan to implement increased levels of professional development to support teachers. Administration indicated that the school will continue to implement the new curriculum and said that it often takes 3-5 years to see big improvements in outcomes.

Students shared that they feel the school offers a wider variety of subjects, outside of school experiences, and new courses can be created based on student recommendations. It is unclear how teachers are ensuring that out of school experiences and new courses are aligned to standards and that appropriate curriculum is implemented. While students appreciate having agency in their learning, this can be challenging for new staff to implement this level of customization in an already new curriculum.

Families indicated that they felt their children were well prepared for life after high-school and shared that the school was, "preparing kids in a different type of way", naming that the school is ensuring positive mental health and independence. Students are able to participate in internships and outside experiences based on their interests.

Staffing

Administration acknowledged that in the past few years, professional development and coaching took a backseat and this was confirmed by the Panorama staff surveys. It was indicated that these items will be a priority this year. The school reduced the number of staff this year by merging two smaller classes (approximately 12-15 students) per grade to create one larger class (approximately 30 students). The school also reduced the Special Education Director position to a half-time position down from a full-time role last year. It was indicated that the full time role was to accommodate a strong candidate who needed full-time work and this reduction back to part-time is more reflective of the school's staffing needs.

While the school has a few teachers who have been at the school for many years, there is a significant number of new teachers this year. Staff who are returning shared that there is a culture of support and flexibility among faculty. Staff indicated that they believe they are making significant impacts on students' lives, however this work is not rapid and takes time.

Facility

With the consolidation of facilities last spring, all students and faculty are currently occupying the Harpswell facility and awaiting the completion of 3 yurts being constructed on the property. Administration indicated that there have been delays in completion of the yurts and as such, classes are occupying shared spaces including the library and gymnasium. High school students interviewed also indicated that they would like to see a more robust library with books for their level and interests.

As of 9/26 there are 28 students in 8th grade. During interviews, students and staff shared that many of the educational spaces felt crowded, particularly for 8th grade. Students noted that the hallways were crowded however staff indicated that they may just feel crowded to students who have been in less full facilities prior to the consolidation. Interviews with students and staff also brought up a concern around water pressure and the ability to keep restrooms and water fountains in working condition.

Finances

Administration shared that they have hired a new Business and Finance Director who began in mid-September and will support the ongoing budget process. The school has not yet seen savings from the consolidation given the increased costs required of facility improvements, yurt construction, and increased costs for food and gas prices. The school was able to reduce the number of bus routes which should provide savings long-term. Administration reported that an additional contractor is being brought on to support the completion of the yurt projects. It is unclear how this unplanned expense will impact the budget.

The current year budget is funded on last year's enrollment of 184 students. The administration identified that in order to be financially viable, they will need a minimum enrollment of 170 students on October 1, 2022 Student Count Day. As of 9/26/22, there were 171 students enrolled. During the site visit, the administration indicated that if they did not hit the target of 170, they could reduce expenses on supplies and professional development as well as increase fundraising efforts; however, it is unclear how sustainable this plan is long term given the continued declining enrollment numbers. Administration indicated that their goal is to enroll

190 students next year and have close to 200 in SY24-25, which would provide additional resources for the educational program.

HCA finished FY22 with a deficit of \$160,000 (5%) and \$220,000 of new debt. Some of the debt had been flagged in prior meetings. The deficit is twice what was initially budgeted and more than expected in April when finances were assessed to be fragile. In the 4th quarter, HCA received nearly \$200,00 in donations and pledges.

Audited results are not yet available, but indications from internal reports are that HCA FY22 results may not meet the Financial Performance Measure requirements for Cash-On-Hand (Near-term Risk), Cash Flow Trend (Sustainability Risk) or fully meet Margin Trend (Sustainability Risk).

HCA FY23-FY26 Budget

The 4-year budget shows enrollment growth to 200 students, stable subsidy rate and expense levels, and annual surpluses sufficient to pay down debt.

Enrollment - remains a challenge with FY23 count likely to fall short of their original 190-student goal. Budget enrollment assumptions are conservative for FY24 but assume increases thereafter:

FY23	184	(Enrollment at 10/1/2021)
FY24	175	(Actual enrollment on 9/26/22 was 171)
FY25	190	
FY26	200	

HCA budgets for modest surpluses in each year FY23-26, and while the debt burden can be carried, there is not enough cash generated from either enrollment or cost savings to provide substantial support to student programming or operations.

In FY23, revenue declined ~\$450k, largely due to the ending of grant funding programs. Total expenses are projected to decline ~\$900k, due to lower grant spending and consolidation savings, especially in facilities and personnel.

The budgeted surplus in FY23 is \$312k with cash flow of only \$77k due debt payments and capital projects costs related to the move of all grades to Harpswell.

HCA represents that they held per student subsidy level to be conservative and have built in 3% to 5% increases in expenses from inflation. HCA did not budget for capital projects except the completion of the Yurts and routine maintenance.

