



# 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

October 2022 Business Meeting of the Maine Charter School Commission

## Maine Charter School Commission Business Meeting – October 11, 2022 @ 1:00pm Room #103, Cross Office Building, Augusta

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/86500283769>

**Meeting ID: 865 0028 3769**

**Passcode: 39679481**

| Item Number | Person Responsible | Agenda Item   | Commission Responsibility or Performance Framework           |
|-------------|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>1</b>    | <i>Wilson</i>      | <b>Call to Order and Declare a Quorum</b>   | <b>N/A</b>   |
|             |                    | <i>A Commission Member will Read the Commission's Vision Statement</i>  |  |
| <b>2</b>    | <i>Wilson</i>      | <b>Reminders</b>  | <b>N/A</b>   |
| 2a          |                    | This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.  |  |
| 2b          |                    | We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are being heard.  |  |
| 2c          |                    | When speaking, state your name and speak slowly and clearly and loudly enough for the captioner to pick up your comments. Gina will interrupt if the captioner is having a difficult time hearing what is being said. |  |
| <b>3</b>    | <i>Wilson</i>      | <b>Comments from Commission Chair, Committee Reports and Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</b>   | <b>N/A</b>   |
| 3a          |                    | <b>Comments from Commission Chair</b>   |  |
| 3b          |                    | <b>Committee Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Performance Committee</li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> <li>• Executive Committee</li> </ul>   | <i>Authorizing/Monitoring and Organization and Operation</i> |

|          |                     |  |                                   |
|----------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 3c       |                     | <b>Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</b>  |                                   |
| 4        | <i>Wilson</i>       | <b>Meeting Minutes Approval</b>  |                                   |
| 4a       |                     | To Consider the Minutes from the September 13, 2022 Business Meeting   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| <b>5</b> | <i>Wilson</i>       | <b>Public Comment*</b>   |                                   |
|          |                     |  |                                   |
| <b>6</b> | <i>Wilson</i>       | <b>Presentations</b>   |                                   |
|          |                     | Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' <a href="#">RREV Grant</a> Award and Plans for New Agricultural/Project Barn - Matt Newberg, Head of School   |                                   |
| <b>7</b> | <i>Wilson/Staff</i> | <b>Executive Director/Commission Staff Report</b>  |                                   |
| 7a       |                     | Update on Q1 Governing Board Chair/President Convening   | <i>Authorizing/Monitoring</i>     |
| 7b       |                     | Update on Lincoln Barretta Enrollment Mastermind Session   | <i>Authorizing/Monitoring</i>     |
| 7c       |                     | Hiring of Part-Time Administrative Assistant   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| 7d       |                     | Update on Custom Performance Framework Targets   | <i>Authorizing/ Monitoring</i>    |
| 7e       |                     | Media Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7e.1 Construction delay cramps Harpswell charter school ahead of renewal vote</li> <li>• 7e.2 Dozens turn out to support Harpswell charter school as commission weighs future</li> <li>• <a href="#">Harpswell Coastal Academy urges community to turn out for hearing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">'We really need this school': HCA parents, students testify in favor of charter renewal</a></li> </ul> |                                   |
| <b>8</b> | <i>Wilson</i>       | <b>Unfinished Business</b>   |                                   |
| 8a       |                     | To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Staff Retirement Benefit ( <i>Tabled Until Recalled</i> )   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| <b>9</b> | <i>Wilson</i>       | <b>New Business Requiring Approval</b>   |                                   |
| 9a       |                     | To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Request to Incur Debt  | <i>Authorizing/Monitoring</i>     |
| 9b       |                     | To Consider the Approval of Harpswell Coastal Academy's Request to Defer the Decision on their Application to  | <i>Authorizing/Monitoring</i>     |

|   |               |  |                            |
|---|---------------|--|----------------------------|
|   |               | Renew its Charter Contract from October 11, 2022 to November 8, 2022   |                            |
| 9c  |               | To Consider the Approval of Harpswell Coastal Academy's Application to Renew its Charter Contract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">9c.1 Performance Report 6.30.22</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">9c.2 Renewal Application</a></li> <li>• 9c.3 Renewal 3 Year Budget Projection</li> <li>• 9c.4 Site Visit Report 2022</li> <li>• 9c.5 Combined Renewal Rubric</li> <li>• 9c.6 Renewal Recommendation</li> </ul> | Authorizing/Monitoring     |
| 9d  |               | To Consider the Approval of Harpswell Coastal Academy's Request to Amend Enrollment  | Authorizing/Monitoring     |
| <b>10</b>   | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>New Business Requiring Notification and Acceptance</b>  |                            |
| 10a   |               | New Governing Board Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10a.1 Tina Meserve - Maine Virtual Academy</li> </ul> Resignations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linda Belanger - Community Regional Charter School</li> <li>• Esther Williamson - Ecology Learning Center</li> <li>• Ed LeBlanc - Maine Virtual Academy</li> </ul> Term Outs: <i>None</i>   | Authorizing/Monitoring     |
| 10b   | <i>Nichi</i>  | FY23 Budget vs. Actual Report  | Organization and Operation |
| <b>11</b>   | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report</b>  |                            |
| 11a   |               | Preliminary 2022-23 Enrollment   | Authorizing/Monitoring     |
| <b>12</b>   | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>Executive Session</b>   | Organization and Operation |
| <p><i>Title 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS, Chapter 13: PUBLIC RECORDS AND PROCEEDINGS, Subchapter 1: FREEDOM OF ACCESS, §405. Executive sessions</i></p> <p><i>(A) Discussion or consideration of the employment, appointment, assignment, duties, promotion, demotion, compensation, evaluation, disciplining, resignation or dismissal of an individual or group of public officials, appointees or employees of the body or agency or the investigation or hearing of charges or complaints against a person or persons subject to the following conditions:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>1) An executive session may be held only if public discussion could be reasonably expected to cause damage to the individual's reputation or the individual's right to privacy would be violated;</i></p> |               |  |                            |
| <b>13</b>   | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>Future Topics</b>   |                            |
| 13a   |               | November:  | Organization and Operation |

|           |               |   |                                   |
|-----------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|
|           |               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Request for a New Facility</li> <li>• Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Request to Incur Debt</li> <li>• Consider the Approval of SY21-22 Annual Monitoring Reports</li> <li>• Consider the Approval of SY21-22 Annual Report to the Commissioner</li> </ul> <p>December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maine Connections Academy's Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation</li> <li>• Maine Virtual Academy's Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation</li> </ul> |                                   |
| <b>14</b> | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>Announcements</b>  | <i>N/A</i>                        |
| 14a       |               | This Month's Celebrations   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| 14b       |               | Important Dates   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| 14c       |               | Portfolio Calendar Items<br><i>(None Reported)</i>  | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| 14d       |               | Next Regular Business Meeting – November 8, 2022 <i>(Community Regional Charter School, 48 South Factory Street, Skowhegan)</i>   | <i>Organization and Operation</i> |
| <b>15</b> | <i>Wilson</i> | <b>Adjourn</b>  | <i>N/A</i>                        |

*\* The Charter School Commission does not allow airing of complaints in public meetings regarding Commission and charter school employees or school employment matters, in order to protect employee privacy, to comply with Maine law and pursuant to our contractual relation with the schools. To the extent that the Commission receives complaints and concerns relating to school employees in writing, those concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the Commission and its staff outside of a public meeting. This meeting is not the appropriate forum for such comments. You are free to direct your concerns in writing to the Commission's Executive Director, if you have not done so already.*



# 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

September 2022 Business Meeting of the Maine Charter School Commission

## The Maine Charter School Commission held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 2022

| Item Number | Agenda Item  |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Call to Order and Declare a Quorum</b>  |
|             | <p>The meeting held in person and via Zoom in accordance with the Commission's remote meeting policy, was called to order by Commission Chair, Wilson Hess, at 1:01pm and a quorum was declared.</p> <p>Commission members present were Nichi Farnham, Shelley Reed, Wilson Hess, Tom Keller, Tori Kornfield (<i>via Zoom</i>), and Jim Rier (<i>via Zoom</i>).</p> <p>Also present were Gina Post and Amy Allen (<i>via Zoom</i>).</p> <p><i>Commission member, Shelley Reed, read the Commission's Vision Statement.</i></p> |
| 2           | <b>Reminders</b>   |
| 2a          | This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.   |
| 2b          | We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are being heard.   |
| 2c          | When speaking, state your name and speak slowly and clearly and loudly enough for the captioner to pick up your comments. Gina will interrupt if the captioner is having a difficult time hearing what is being said.  |
| 3           | <b>Comments from Commission Chair, Committee Reports and Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</b>  |
| 3a          | <p><b>Comments from Commission Chair</b></p> <p>Chair Hess shared that it was "great to be at MEAA" and enjoyed the tour that he had prior to the meeting and expressed the importance for Commission members to visit schools to see, hear, and experience what is happening on the campuses.</p> <p>He also congratulated schools on the opening of a new school year.</p>   |
| 3b          | <p><b>Committee Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelley Reed - Chair, School Performance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee</li> <li>Nichi Farnham - Chair, Finance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee</li> </ul>   |

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wilson Hess - Chair, Executive Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee</li> </ul>   |
| 3c | <p><b><u>Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</u></b><br/>None</p>  |
| 4  | <p><b>Meeting Minutes Approval</b></p>  |
| 4a | <p>To Consider the Minutes from the August 9, 2022 Business Meeting</p> <p>A copy of the draft minutes was distributed for review and consideration.</p> <p><b>Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present</b> to approve the minutes from the August 9, 2022 Business Meeting.</p>  |
| 5  | <p><b>Public Comment*</b></p> <p>Sherry Gilbert, Maine Arts Academy Board President, shared that the Academy will be hosting the Pihcintu Multicultural Girls Choir on September 24th. Tickets will be \$10 at the door and additional donations will support Maine Arts Academy's "Help Us Build A New Home Fund".</p> <p>Bob Kautz, former Executive Director of the Maine Charter School Commission, shared that while onboarding future Commission members it is important to point out the differences between the financing of public charter schools vs. the financing of regular public schools (i.e., access to transportation funding, buildings, and other loans) and reminded Commission members that public charter schools do not have access to local dollars.</p> |
| 6  | <p><b>Presentations</b></p> <p>None</p>   |
| 7  | <p><b>Unfinished Business</b></p>   |
| 7a | <p>To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Staff Retirement Benefit</p> <p>Motion to table until a recommendation is received and reviewed by the Executive Committee.</p> <p><b>Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present</b> to table until a recommendation is received and reviewed by the Executive Committee.</p>   |
| 8  | <p><b>New Business Requiring Approval</b></p> <p>None</p>   |
| 9  | <p><b>New Business Requiring Notification and Acceptance</b></p>  |
| 9a | <p>The following new governing board member appointments were announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theresa Overall - Community Regional Charter School</li> <li>Robert Dodge - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences</li> </ul> <p>The following resignations were announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stacy Stevens - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences</li> <li>Maggie Allen - Maine Arts Academy</li> </ul> <p>There were no term outs to report.</p>   |

|           |   |
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|           | <p><b>Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present</b> to accept notifications of new board members as presented.</p>   |
| 9b        | <p>FY23 Budget vs. Actual Report</p> <p>A copy of the new report format was distributed for review.</p> <p><b>Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Shelley Reed and Voted unanimously by those present</b> to accept the FY23 Budget vs. Actual Report in its new format.</p>  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Executive Director/Commission Staff Report</b>   |
| 10a       | <p>Update on Progress of HCA Charter Renewal</p> <p>The Renewal Visit with the school is scheduled for September 14th. Staff will meet with focus groups (students, parents/families, and school staff) as well as members of the Governing Board and Leadership Team. A site visit report will be created and submitted to the Commission for review prior to the Public Hearing which will be held on September 29th.</p> <p>Since staff last updated the Commission on the progress of the consolidation work being done on campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two yurts have been framed and are still under construction.</li> <li>• The school reports that the temporary classrooms are functioning adequately.</li> <li>• They are approximately 81% enrolled with 171 students (enrollment goal is 210 students).</li> <li>• They are now fully staffed with the exception of a Business Manager who has been hired and will begin on September 19th.</li> </ul> |
| 10b       | <p>Update on End of Year Monitoring</p> <p>Staff reported that four schools were on cycle for a monitoring visit (ACADIA Academy, Ecology Learning Center, Maine Arts Academy, and Maine Connections Academy) and that staff opted to visit two schools that were not on cycle – Community Regional Charter School and Maine Arts Academy – as the conditions for renewal had just been met.</p> <p>Two of these visits were done in June and four were done in August. Site visit reports have been completed and will be part of the 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Reports which staff anticipate will be ready for Commission consideration at the November meeting.</p>   |
| 10c       | <p>Update on Performance Framework Amendments</p> <p>Staff reported that eight charter contracts needed to be amended with the new performance framework. That process is complete. Neither the CRCS nor the MeANS charter contract required amendments as the new framework was included in their recently signed contracts.</p> <p>Staff held two performance framework information sessions for board members and school staff to attend. Between the two sessions, there were 24 attendees.</p>   |

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|-----------|--|
|           | Both sessions were the same and staff went through the framework indicator by indicator to be sure that schools understood the expectations. A satisfaction survey was disseminated after both sessions and feedback was very positive.  |
| 10d/10e   | <p>Update on MeANS and CRCS Intervention Level 2</p> <p>For both MEANS and CRCS, staff have issued an intervention letter and developed a process for continuing to monitor areas that were conditions for renewal and have added a few more that are areas of concern (attendance rates, graduation rates, academic performance).</p> <p>Staff will conduct a fall meeting, a mid-year meeting and an end of year meeting to track and monitor progress.</p>  |
| 10f       | <p><a href="#">New Baxter Academy Executive Director</a></p> <p>Anna Marie Klein-Christie has been hired as the new Executive Director at Baxter Academy. She began in early September. Staff have been in contact with her and look forward to working with her throughout the year.</p>  |
| 10g       | <p>Media Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">New principal aims to bring stability in wake of Harpswell Coastal Academy's hectic year</a></li> </ul>   |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report</b>  |
| 11a       | <p>Charter Public School Enrollment/Unenrollment <i>(Previously Tabled)</i></p> <p>A copy of the year-end portfolio data for the 2021-22 school year was distributed for review and discussion.</p> <p>This data is looked at on a monthly basis and staff report that they look for “trends and red flags” and reach out to schools for clarification as needed.</p> <p>Commission members expressed an interest in seeing this data on a more regular basis. Staff will prepare and present the portfolio data along with individual school data to the School Performance Committee at least quarterly.</p> |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Future Topics</b>   |
| 12a       | <p>October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission Vote on HCA Renewal</li> <li>• Q1 Governing Board Chair Convening</li> </ul> <p>November:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of SY21-22 Annual Monitoring Reports</li> </ul> <p>December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maine Connections Academy's Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation</li> <li>• Maine Virtual Academy's Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation</li> </ul>  |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Announcements</b>   |
| 13a       | <p>This Month's Celebrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congratulations to Lana on the birth of her baby boy, Luca Jonathan Forrest, who was born on September 7th.</li> </ul>   |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 13b       | Important Dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Hearing for Renewal, Harpswell Coastal Academy/9 Ash Point Road, Harpswell and via Zoom/September 29th (4:30-6:00pm)</li> </ul> |
| 13c       | Portfolio Calendar Items<br><i>(None Reported)</i>  |
| 13d       | Next Regular Business Meeting – October 11, 2022 <i>(Room #103, Cross Office Building, Augusta)</i>   |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Adjourn</b>  |
|           | Chair Hess declared adjournment at 2:22pm with no objections.   |

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DRAFT

# Construction delay cramps Harpswell charter school ahead of renewal vote

The Maine Charter School Commission will hold a public hearing at Harpswell Coastal Academy at 4:30 on September 29 as it considers the school's charter renewal application.

BY [JOHN TERHUNE](#) TIMES RECORD



Harpswell Coastal Academy's yurts, which were cited as key components of the school's consolidation plan, stand unfinished on Sept. 22, 2022. *John Terhune / The Times Record*

[Last spring, an outpouring of community support helped keep Harpswell Coastal Academy alive](#) despite financial and enrollment struggles that nearly doomed the charter school, which takes in students who often don't feel at home in the traditional public school system.

Next week, in the face of construction delays that have forced students into close quarters to start the academic year, administrators hope testimony from students, parents and community members will help HCA clear one more [daunting hurdle: the charter renewal process](#).

Harpswell Coastal Academy, unified on one campus after a [hectic consolidation process this summer](#), will host the Maine Charter School Commission for a public hearing from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Sept. 29. The school's supporters will make their

case for why the commission, which last spring expressed concerns about HCA's enrollment and attendance, should offer it a new five-year charter.

"There are a lot of people that have taken advantage of coming here that have really discovered a different way to approach their education that works for them, that makes them feel successful," Interim Head of School Mel Christensen Fletcher said. "We want to make sure that that option continues to be here."

Internal survey data and state test scores suggest HCA is on the right track, she said.

According to the school's charter renewal application, 60% of HCA students met growth goals in mathematics on their NWEA standardized tests last year, up from less than 30% in 2017-18. Just over 60% of students met growth goals in language, up from around 40% five years ago.

"All of the measures that we looked at showed the same thing," Christensen Fletcher said. "Over the past five years, we've seen steady improvement as a school."

Yet despite the school's apparent academic progress, its transition to a single campus hasn't gone as smoothly as hoped.

Principal Amy Marx told The Times Record in August she expected contractors would complete work on three yurts before the arrival of students this fall, but the structures remain unfinished. The construction delays have forced HCA's fifth- and sixth-grade teachers to make classrooms out of the library and a sectioned off corner of the multipurpose room that functions as both a gymnasium and a cafeteria.

The school's low enrollment, [which was a sticking point with the Charter Commission last spring](#), also has proved a difficult challenge to solve, Christensen Fletcher said, adding that uncertainty around the HCA's future has made it difficult to recruit new students. Currently, 170 students attend Harpswell Coastal Academy, down from 184 a year ago and 205 from 2017-18.

So far, the yurt delay hasn't been an issue for teachers and students, according to Christensen Fletcher, who hopes the structures will be ready for students in October.

She said the bigger challenge to renewal may be the appointment of up to three new members of the commission, who are set to replace several outgoing members who all supported HCA's consolidation plan last spring.

James R. Handy of Lewiston already has been sworn in as one of the commission's seven voting members, according to Gina Post, the body's interim executive director. The secretary of state's office has not yet announced when two other candidates, Leigh Weisenburger Albert of Lewiston and Norman E. Higgins of Sebec, could take their seats.

With Harpswell Coastal Academy needing five members to vote in favor of renewal (or four members if a vacancy on the board remains unfilled) at the commission's Oct. 11 meeting, [the school's fate may rest with the community members](#) who turned out by the dozens to keep its doors open last spring.

Those interested in sharing their thoughts on HCA with the Charter School Commission can attend the Sept. 29 public hearing in person or via Zoom. The commission will also accept written testimony emailed to [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov) until 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 6.

# Dozens turn out to support Harpswell charter school as commission weighs future

More than 30 students, parents and community members spoke in support of Harpswell Coastal Academy at a public hearing Thursday evening, less than two weeks before the Maine Charter School Commission will vote on the school's future.

BY [JOHN TERHUNE](#) TIMES RECORD



Harpswell Coastal Academy parents, students and supporters wait for their chance to speak in support of the school on September 29, 2022. *John Terhune / The Times Record*

More than 30 students, parents and community members spoke in support of Harpswell Coastal Academy at a public hearing Thursday, [less than two weeks before the Maine Charter School Commission is set to decide the school's future.](#)

“HCA is our Goldilocks school: It is just right,” said parent Leslie Watts, speaking to a crowd of about 80 live and virtual attendees. “And you can see that it’s the Goldilocks for a lot of other people.”

Harpswell Coastal Academy, which offers an experienced-based curriculum to students in grades 5-12, has served as a [haven for many kids who struggle to succeed socially or academically in](#)

[the traditional public school system](#). But low enrollment and high chronic absenteeism rates have put the school on shaky ground in the final months of its current five-year charter.

In May, lobbying efforts from dozens of community members helped [convince the Charter Commission to approve HCA’s plan to consolidate its two campuses](#), a move administrators said was necessary for the school’s survival. While the vote helped keep the institution’s doors open this fall, Commission members warned that they needed to see improvement before renewing HCA’s charter.

“The job is well-begun,” said Commission Chair Wilson Hess after joining the 4-1 majority that approved the consolidation proposal. “But it is only begun. There’s much work left to do.”



HCA’s yurts, which were cited as key components of the school’s consolidation plan, stand unfinished on September 22, 2022. *John Terhune / The Times Record*

While the school’s leaders have [spent recent months compiling test scores and other metrics they say prove HCA is hitting educational benchmarks](#), speakers at Wednesday’s public hearing focused more on the institution’s ability to provide a welcoming home for students with a wide range of identities, including those with learning disabilities, physical ailments, and mental health struggles.

“HCA staff overall have been very inclusive to students such as myself and have kept me and other queer students feeling safe,” said sophomore Alexa Saft, who identifies as transgender. “A

single sentiment has been echoed among almost all HCA students who attended public school: I can't go back.”

More than one parent struggled to hold back tears [while speaking about their children finding happiness at HCA](#) after struggling to make friends in other settings.

“Mental health is so much more important than anything academic,” parent Jaye Kalil said. “An ‘A’ doesn’t mean anything if you want to go kill yourself.”

Several current students and recent graduates said HCA’s flexible curriculum helped them discover a passion for school by allowing them to take extra time when needed or jump grade levels to find an appropriate challenge.

State Rep. Poppy Arford was one of a handful of local politicians to support charter renewal.

“Common sense tells us that one educational model does not fit for all students, which is why alternatives, why options, are critically important for the health of our public education system and its students,” she said. “Closing any school that is working for students who might otherwise fail as we continue to face the COVID challenges of the pandemic may prove to be unwise.



Gina Post (left), interim executive director of the Maine Charter School Commission, listens to public support for HCA with voting members Nichi Farnham (center) and Norman Higgins (right) on September 29, 2022. Other Commission members attended the hearing remotely. *John Terhune / The Times Record*

The seven voting members of the Charter Commission will vote on HCA's renewal application at their October 11 meeting. Five members must support renewal, or the school will close at the end of the academic year.

Those who couldn't attend the public hearing or didn't have time to speak at the event can email their thoughts on HCA to the Commission at [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov) by Friday, October 7 at 5 p.m. About 30 people have already sent in letters supporting the school, according to Commission staff.

Though the institution currently on track to [fall short of enrollment goals for a third straight year](#), parent Sam Mathis urged the Commission to put students' well-being ahead of strict numerical targets.

"Returning to public school is simply not an option for (my daughter)," he said. "It's not an option for a lot of kids at HCA, and if HCA closes, they will become dropouts and all that comes with it."

# MCSC

## MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

### Request for Charter School Amendment to Incur Debt

Please Note – This form is required when a school wants to take out new debt, consolidate current debt, or is seeking an extended line of credit.

Upon receipt of the completed form, including a letter of commitment from the lender, staff will review the request and share it with the Commission's Finance Committee before presentation to the full Commission for determination.

The completion of the process will take anywhere from approximately 3-8 weeks.

**Maine Charter School Commission**  
182 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine  
04333-0182  
[www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc)

**Maine Charter School Commission  
Charter Amendment Cover Sheet**

## Amendment Request to Incur Debt

### School Information

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Date of Request                 | August 31, 2022  |
| School Name and Mailing Address | Community Regional Charter School<br>48 So. Factory St<br>Skowhegan ME 04976 |
| Contact                         | Travis Workes  |
| Contact telephone number        | 207 399-6502   |
| Contact email address           | Tworkes@crcsme.org   |

### Provide a brief narrative description of the request.

CRCs requests authorization to incur debt in order to replace the existing leaking roof at our Overman Academy building. We are requesting to obtain a \$100,000, 3 year loan from Bangor Savings Bank.

The completed Amendment Request **must** be uploaded and submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission through Epicenter.

On an additional page, please provide the following in your request.

- Plan of financing and use of borrowed funds. Describe the desired improvements that will result from the use of the funds.

- Details of the borrowing including lender, timing, amount to be borrowed, interest rate, term and frequency of payments, covenants (including any cross-collateralization), and other restrictions. Attach commitment letter. (A proposal letter can be attached to begin the amendment process if all material terms are negotiated. A commitment letter will be required to receive an Amendment approval.)
- Summary details of existing debt
- Support and Analysis of Capacity to Repay –
  - General discussion of financial capacity and stability including related enrollment history and plans. Discuss any reliance on new or existing philanthropy to meet financial obligations.
  - Three-year projection (beginning with the year the new borrowing occurs) of statement of activities with calculation of cash available for debt service, showing debt service for all existing obligations and the new requested borrowing.
  - Schedule of all projected Financial Performance Measures for the three-years mentioned above.

## **CRCS Amendment Request to Incur Debt**

CRCS needs to replace the leaking roof at our Overman Campus. The Quoted cost for roof replacement is \$149,968.00 and can be completed in October 2022. Please see attached Quote from G&E Roofing

Bangor Savings Bank has provided us with financing costs. Please see attached correspondence from Tina Willard. We propose to pay \$49,968 from existing reserves and finance the remaining \$100,000 with monthly payments over a 3 year period beginning in October or November 2022.

CRCS paid off a 2 year \$100,000 loan in May 2022 with monthly payments of \$4,400. The proposed loan payments will be approximately \$3,040 per month. (approximately \$1,000 less per month).

In addition in September 2023, we will be retiring debt on 2 vehicle loans with monthly payments of \$782 and \$375. In December 2023, we will have completed a lease for folding walls with monthly payments of \$3688. The result is a combined monthly savings of \$4845 by January 2024.

CRCS anticipates steadily increased enrollment over the next 3 years. Based on conservative enrollment increases, we have prepared projected budgets which show we have the financial capacity to absorb this short term debt.

Please see attached CRCS Three year Projection spreadsheet which includes:  
Statement of Activity 3 Projections  
3 Year Financial Performance Measures  
Details of all existing Debt

If you have any questions, please contact Travis Works.

# Proposal



G&E ROOFING CO, INC 669 RIVERSIDE DR AUGUSTA, ME 04330 (207)622-9503 FAX (207) 622-7697

*Incorporated 1975*

*Norman S. Elvin, President*

**FOR:** Skowhegan Regional Charter School  
48 South Factory Street  
Skowhegan, Maine 04976

**PROPOSAL #**PR110829

**DATE:** March 30, 2022

**PROJECT:** Skowhegan Reg Charter School  
78 Water St  
Skowhegan, ME

ATTN: Kit Canning

After reviewing the roof at the above-referenced facility, we are pleased to present to you our observations and recommendations in the following proposal:

## Area(s) Addressed by this Proposal

Roof 1 as highlighted on attached G&E roof drawing #5282

## Current Roof Observations

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Section reference:   | Roof 1   |
| Deck/understructure: | Wood (boards)  |
| Vapor barrier:       | None   |
| Insulation:          | 1/2" fiberboard  |
| Roof system:         | 4 plies of felt, set in asphalt, smooth surface                      |
| Condition/age:       | Unknown / 20+ years (estimated)                                      |
| Reported leakage:    | Throughout, but primarily near 2 of the roof drains                  |
| Known issues:        | Aging roof system, deteriorating felts, substandard/improper details |

## Objective(s) of this Proposal

- Solution to known issues within the identified roof area

## Recommended Solution and Specification(s)

Install a single-ply membrane roof system using the following specification:

- All work will be completed in accordance with applicable OSHA safety standards.
- Mobilize for project in area shown on enclosed roof drawing (see exclusions).
- Remove the existing roofing materials down to the deck.
- Eliminate discontinued rooftop penetrations, conduit and scuttle. Patch decking as required.
- Install new wooden nailers along perimeter as required.
- Install an approximate R-30 polyisocyanurate insulation, mechanically fastened into the deck with

- roof system manufacturer approved screws and plates.
- Fully adhere a .060" EPDM membrane, manufactured by Carlisle SynTec or Firestone Building Products, to the new insulation.
  - Install new bronze colored 24 gauge steel edge detail along perimeter.
  - Install new flashings at walls and roof penetrations per manufacturer's specifications.
  - Install new Retrofit roof drains with 4' x 4' sump to replace existing drains.
  - Install manufacturer-approved walkway pads at access panels of serviceable rooftop equipment.
  - This work includes a 15-year limited membrane system warranty from the manufacturer.

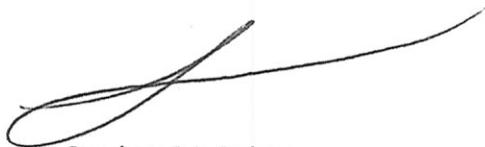
**Quote: \$149,968.00**

**ASBESTOS NOTE:** With a signed contract, the roof felts and/or flashings will be tested for asbestos at no charge to the owner. Licensed G&E Roofing personnel will perform appropriate handling, air monitoring and disposal of any identified asbestos-containing materials at an additional cost of \$11,628.00.

We wish to thank you for the opportunity to assist you with our recommendations in this proposal. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact our office at (207) 622-9503. To authorize the specified work, please complete and sign the attached Contract Terms and Conditions. **If this proposal is not accepted within 30 days, G&E Roofing reserves the right to renegotiate the price.**

If, between the authorization and performance dates of this contract, material prices significantly increase through no fault of G&E Roofing, prices of affected materials will be equitably adjusted by change order and passed along to building owner by any amount reasonably necessary to cover any such increases.

Sincerely,



Stephen P LaPointe  
Account Manager



## Contract Terms and Conditions

### PROPOSAL #PR110829

- This proposal includes the disposal of roof debris at an approved landfill. If, at the time of disposal, this facility has closed or increased its rates, any additional disposal costs will be the responsibility of the owner. G&E Roofing will notify the owner before any work is started if the landfill has closed, changed its policy on receiving roof debris or increased its rates. This will give both parties the opportunity to renegotiate the cost change or void the contract.
- Unless otherwise noted in this proposal, the recommended specification does not include deck replacement. If deteriorated deck is discovered, it will be replaced on a time and material basis with the owner's approval. If electrical conduits or other utilities are attached to the bottom of the existing deck, it will be the owner's responsibility to bring this condition to the contractor's attention. Any damage to conduits or wiring caused by insulation fasteners penetrating the deck will be the owner's responsibility. Any additional work required to avoid damage to conduits will be performed at an additional cost.
- Unless otherwise noted in this proposal, the recommended specification is not designed to meet any specific insurance company (i.e., Factory Mutual) requirements and the quote is not based upon use of any state or federal wage scales (i.e., Davis Bacon).
- Additional roof drains may be required in the event that positive drainage does not occur and ponding water remains on the roof 48 hours after precipitation. Taking this action will ensure that the manufacturer's warranty remains in effect. The owner will be responsible for any additional costs if this action is necessary.
- All material is guaranteed to be as specified. All work will be completed in a workmanlike manner according to standard practices. Any alteration or deviation from the proposed specification involving extra costs will become an extra charge over and above the quote. The owner will provide G&E Roofing with electricity during construction. G&E Roofing is fully covered by liability insurance and our workers are fully covered by workers' compensation insurance.
- This contract is subject to credit approval. Payment will be 100% due and payable 10 days from invoice and with owner's acceptance of work performed. Monthly requisitions for a percentage of materials and labor may be issued and will be due and payable 10 days from the date of requisition. To help control risk from escalating material costs, the owner agrees to honor requisitions for payment of materials when G&E takes delivery. An interest charge of 1.5% per month may be added to balances over 30 days. In the event of default the owner agrees to reimburse G&E Roofing 10% of the contract amount or for all reasonable expenses, including attorney fees, incurred by G&E Roofing in enforcing its rights against the owner, whichever is greater.**

**DECK NOTE:** An industry standard pull test may be required prior to the start of this project. The test will reveal whether the roof deck meets manufacturer's warranty criteria for fastening the proposed roof system. In the unlikely event of an unsuccessful test, the specification and quote must be revised for authorization prior to proceeding with this project.

**STRUCTURAL NOTE:** The proposed specification may add minimal weight to the roof structure. If there is any concern about this added weight or about a change additional insulation could create regarding snow loading, we recommend consulting a structural engineer before authorizing this project.

**SNOW RESTRAINT NOTE:** A snow restraint system is designed to reduce the amount of snow sliding off the roof. If there is any concern about the added weight of snow and ice on the roof structure, we recommend consulting a structural engineer before authorizing a snow restraint project.

**CONDENSATION NOTE:** For roofs over freezer/cooler areas, we recommend consulting an engineer to ensure potential condensation issues have been adequately addressed prior to installation of a new roof system.

**ADHESION NOTE:** Coating applications require an adhesion test to determine compatibility of the existing roof with the coating. A test application on the existing roof must cure a minimum of 10-14 days before the test can be completed. Our coating specification and quote are based on a successful adhesion test. In the event of an unsuccessful test, a proposal revision may be necessary prior to proceeding with this project.

**CONTRACT EXCLUSIONS** (unless otherwise noted in proposal)

- Additional costs associated with project mobilization (including crane rental) if we cannot set up in the area identified on the attached roof drawing.
- Additional costs associated with any unplanned work stoppages as directed by owner's representative.
- Snow and ice removal should this project be scheduled in cold weather.
- Building owner will be responsible for electrical disconnection/reconnection and raising/lowering of any rooftop equipment over 400 lbs that may be necessary to complete this project.
- Owner will be responsible for movement/realignment of any existing satellite dishes to accommodate this project.
- For drains less than 3" in diameter, a watertight connection at the drain is not possible without additional work being performed. We strongly recommend you have a plumber inspect all roof drainage systems prior to reroofing to ensure their proper operation. G&E Roofing will not be liable if a restriction in the drain plumbing or a full drainage system creates water backup and leakage.
- When changing a ballasted roof system to a system without roof ballast, there will be an increased rate of water flow to the existing roof drains when it rains. As the water flow increases, so does the weight of the water in the drain pipes. If there is an obstruction of water flow in a drain pipe, weight will increase as water backs up and fills the pipe. If the drain pipes have been installed following local codes, there should be no issues with the additional weight of water in the pipes. If the pipes are not properly installed, the added weight of water could cause them to disconnect from the roof drain or at other joints in the pipes. For these reasons, it is important that the owner have the roof drain pipes inspected for proper securement. Any failure from movement of the existing pipes is not the responsibility of G&E Roofing. The common issue is the lack of securement adjacent to the pipe elbow directly below the roof drain.

- ❑ Installation of wooden nailers for new construction projects.
- ❑ A man lift may be required on this project in order to properly and safely perform the required work. The man lift is a large, very heavy piece of equipment requiring special consideration with respect to access around the building. It is the owner's responsibility to notify us in advance of the job starting of any underground water, sewer or electrical lines or any other structures below the surface. We will take appropriate precautions to avoid damage to lawns surrounding the work and access areas and will repair any lawn damage should it occur.
- ❑ For projects involving a warranted roof coating, the manufacturer's warranty excludes coverage for leakage caused by ponding water, which includes ice dams.
- ❑ Interior protection will be the responsibility of the building owner.

### BEFORE ACCEPTING THIS CONTRACT

Has a project mobilization area been discussed and agreed upon and has the potential for change due to internal customer demands been discussed?    yes     no

Have planned working hours for this project been discussed and agreed upon?    yes     no

Has the potential for construction noise and product odors been discussed and do you have a plan to address these potential issues within the facility?    yes     no

Have specific project scheduling needs been discussed and agreed upon?    yes     no  (AFTER Sept 1)

Do you understand the Proposal Terms and Conditions, including payment?    yes     no

If the answer to any question is no, we must discuss the project more before authorization. Working out these issues now is necessary to help avoid potential conflicts before and during construction.

### CONTRACT AUTHORIZATION

If you accept the proposed specification(s), please complete, sign and return one copy of this contract to our office. If you prefer, you may issue a purchase order reflecting the proposal number and contract amount. **NO WORK WILL BE SCHEDULED UNTIL THIS AUTHORIZATION IS RECEIVED.**

The proposed specification(s), quote(s), terms and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. G&E Roofing is authorized to perform the work as specified in the referenced proposal. The undersigned swears to have the authority to authorize work for the building owner.

AUTHORIZED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 3-30-22

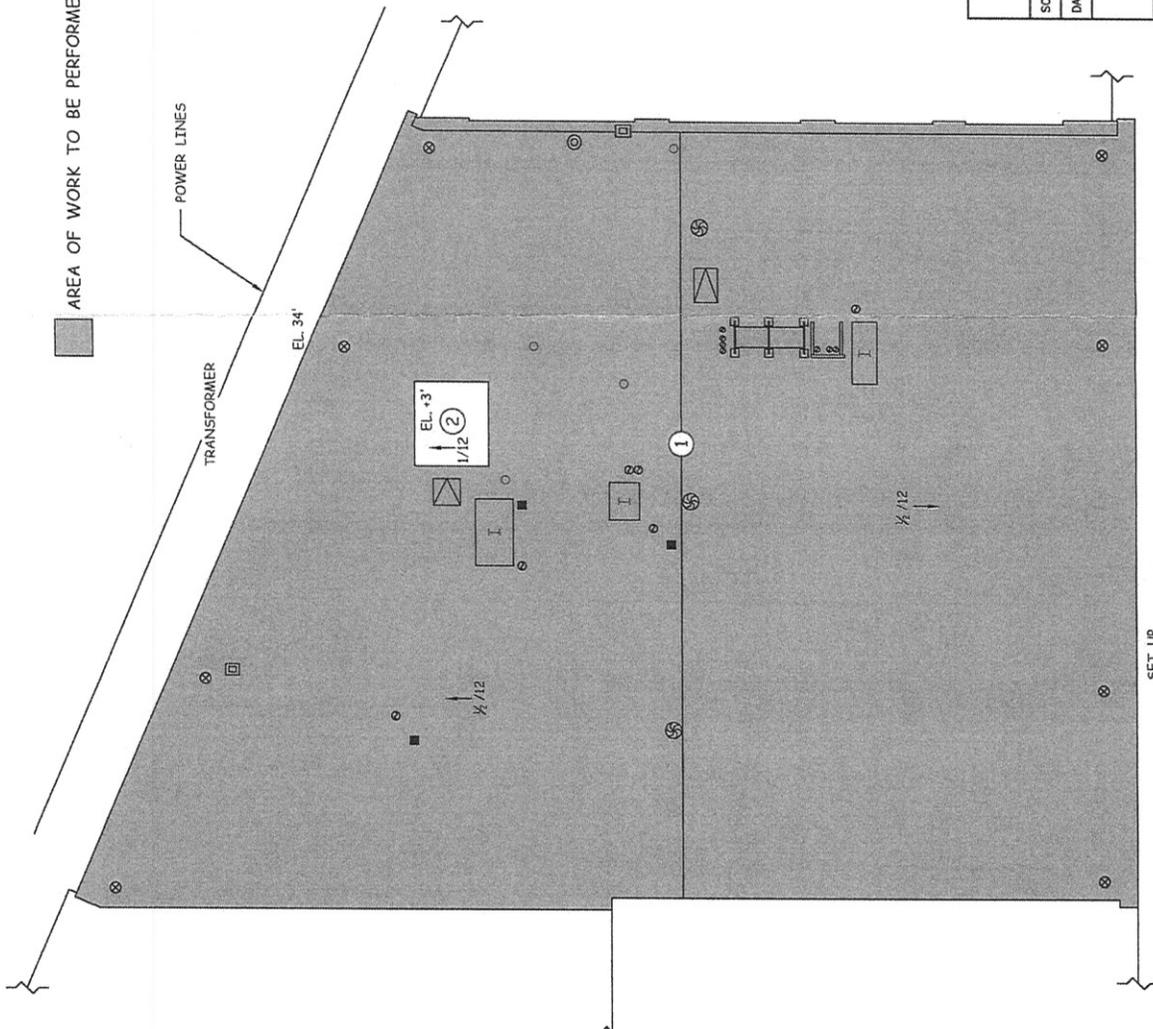
PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

CONTRACT AMOUNT (including any applicable alternates) \$149,168

LEGAL NAME OF BUILDING OWNER to whom any proposed warranty will be issued:

\_\_\_\_\_

AREA OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED UNDER PROPOSAL #PR - 110829



- LEGEND:**
- UNIT
  - ⊗ TURBINE
  - ⊞ CHIMNEY
  - VENT STACK
  - ⊗ ROOF DRAIN
  - ⊗ FLASHED PIPE
  - PITCH POCKET
  - ⊞ ROOF SECTION
  - EL. = ROOF ELEVATION

|   |               |                         |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| SKOWHEGAN REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL<br>78 WATER ST.<br>SKOWHEGAN, MAINE   |               | APPROVED BY:<br>J.E.R.  |
| SCALE: N.T.S.   | DATE: 9/21/09 | REVISED: 3/7/22         |
| G&E ROOFING CO., INC.<br>669 RIVERSIDE DRIVE<br>AUGUSTA, MAINE  |               | DRAWING NUMBER:<br>5282 |
| <small>THIS DRAWING IS THE SOLE PROPERTY OF G&amp;E ROOFING CO., INC. AND SHALL NOT BE REPRODUCED OR USED IN ANY MANNER OTHER THAN AS SPECIFIED HEREON BY THE OWNERS OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVES AND G&amp;E ROOFING CO., INC.</small> |               |                         |

SET UP  
AREA  
EL. 34'

Roof Request

Willard, Tina <Tina.Willard@bangor.com>  
To: Jill Alves <jalves@crsme.org>  
Cc: "Cameron, Sean" <Sean.Cameron@bangor.com>

Wed, May 18, 2022 at 2:31 PM

Good afternoon Jill,

I just had a chance to speak with Sean today and below is the information you requested:

|                   |           |           |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                   | 3 yrs     | 5 yrs     |
| Rate today        | 5.95%     | 5.96%     |
| Amount            | \$100,000 | \$100,000 |
| Estimated Payment | \$3,040   | \$1,930   |
| Amount            | \$150,000 | \$150,000 |
| Estimated Payment | \$4,560   | \$2,897   |

Please let me know if I can help with any other questions.

Have a great day.

[Quoted text hidden]

October 4, 2022

Via Email to [gina.post@maine.gov](mailto:gina.post@maine.gov)

Gina Post  
Interim Executive Director  
Maine Charter School Commission

***Re: Application for the Renewal of Harpswell Coastal Academy***

Interim Executive Director Post,

I write to you as counsel for Harpswell Coastal Academy (HCA), a public charter school that applied for its third contract renewal on September 2, 2022. As you know, HCA serves students in grades 5-12 in Harpswell, Maine drawing students from approximately thirty different surrounding towns. HCA's renewal application highlighted the school's growth academically, fiscally and in terms of supporting its mission, as well as addressing the challenges it has faced over the last few years—many of which are struggles that are common to all public schools in Maine as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When HCA submitted its renewal application on September 2, 2022 by the deadline, the school did not have the ability to incorporate information into its application that would reflect the positive, objectively-measured changes this school year has brought. For example, attendance rates have improved by 12% this fall when one excludes CDC-mandated COVID-19-related absences, as compared with the previous school year:

| Percentage of Students Chronically Absent |            |                |   |
|---|------------|----------------|---|
|   | 2021-22    | September 2022 | September 2022 - Without Covid Absences |
| Division 1                                | 42%        | 58%            | 36%                                     |
| Divisions 2/3                             | 61%        | 57%            | 46%                                     |
| <b>School Average</b>                     | <b>53%</b> | 58%            | <b>41%</b>                              |

Crew leaders (homeroom teachers) have been making phone calls home to all families in the first weeks of the school year to connect with families, establish positive communication, and discuss barriers to attendance. Throughout October, teachers and administrators will be in close contact with families of students that have more than two absences already (considered chronically absent in September) to develop and implement plans to support attendance. The results of these efforts will show progress towards HCA's goal of reducing absenteeism, while continuing to abide by COVID-19 protocols for the safety of the school community. In addition, HCA has this week begun NWEA testing and has worked towards improving both its participation rate in

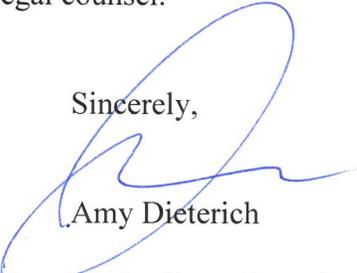
testing and student outcomes. The results of this testing will only be available at the end of October.

It is with this background that HCA requests that the Commissioners defer a decision on HCA's pending renewal application from its October 11, 2022 meeting until its meeting on November 8, 2022. This additional time will allow HCA to present the Commissioners with a more substantially complete and up-to-date assessment of the school's merit and performance this fall, particularly with respect to NWEA testing results, which will not be available until the Commissioners' November meeting. In addition, it is my understanding that the Maine Charter School Commission has very recently welcomed three new Commissioners, which is nearly half of its voting membership. By its October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, these new Commissioners will have had a very limited amount of time to get to know HCA and its community, as well as the significant amount of complex documentation relevant to the many performance metrics of a public charter school. I also understand that at least one of the new Commissioners will not have time to visit the school until after the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, which means that he or she will be put in the difficult position of voting about a school's facilities they have never seen.

HCA believes that fairness, equity and due process support its request to postpone a decision on its renewal application until November. The decision about HCA's renewal is critically important to the hundreds of people who attend the school, work at the school and are parents of students at the school. A brief extension shall allow the Commissioners to fully appreciate the progress HCA has made, and is making, towards the performance expectations set forth in the existing charter contract. Although the Maine Charter School Commission's regulations and Maine statute provide that a decision on a renewal application will be issued within 45 days of its receipt, which would be October 17<sup>th</sup>, that deadline can be changed if HCA and the Commissioners agree. HCA waives its right to a decision being issued by October 17<sup>th</sup> and agrees to this brief extension.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this request with you or the Commission's legal counsel.

Sincerely,



Amy Dieterich

cc: Cynthia Shelmerdine (via Email to [cwshelm@gmail.com](mailto:cwshelm@gmail.com))  
Mel Christensen (via Email to [mcf@harpwellcoastalacademy.org](mailto:mcf@harpwellcoastalacademy.org))

|   | FY23 Budget                | FY24 Projection          | FY25 Projection          | FY26 Projection          |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Enrollment Assumption                         | 184 students @<br>\$13,200 | 175 students<br>\$12,800 | 190 students<br>\$12,800 | 200 students<br>\$12,800 |
| <b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>                |                            |                          |                          |                          |
| <b>Income</b>                                 |                            |                          |                          |                          |
| Total 100 · General Revenue                   | \$2,428,482                | \$2,240,000              | \$2,432,000              | \$2,560,000              |
| Total 200 · Federal Funds                     | \$227,112                  | \$193,043                | \$193,043                | \$193,043                |
| Total 300 · Fundraising Activities            | \$50,000                   | \$50,000                 | \$50,000                 | \$50,000                 |
| Total 400 · School Programs & Activities      | \$12,960                   | \$12,960                 | \$12,960                 | \$12,960                 |
| <b>Total Income</b>                           | <b>\$2,718,554</b>         | <b>\$2,496,003</b>       | <b>\$2,688,003</b>       | <b>\$2,816,003</b>       |
| <b>Gross Profit</b>                           | <b>\$2,718,554</b>         | <b>\$2,496,003</b>       | <b>\$2,688,003</b>       | <b>\$2,816,003</b>       |
| <b>Expense</b>                                |                            |                          |                          |                          |
| Total 1000 · Board of Directors               | \$36,352                   | \$37,594                 | \$39,474                 | \$41,447                 |
| Total 1100 · System Head of School Office     | \$165,377                  | \$164,232                | \$170,300                | \$176,949                |
| Total 1200 · System Business Office           | \$162,900                  | \$166,179                | \$173,548                | \$178,673                |
| Total 1300 · Improvement of Instruction       | \$128,657                  | \$132,176                | \$138,232                | \$144,743                |
| Total 1800 · Coronavirus Relief Fund 1        | \$0                        | \$0                      | \$0                      | \$0                      |
| Total 1900 · Coronavirus Relief Fund 2        | \$0                        | \$0                      | \$0                      | \$0                      |
| Total 1000 · Administration                   | \$493,286                  | \$462,470                | \$521,554                | \$541,812                |
| Total 2000* · Div 1 (K-8) Regular Instruction | \$301,853                  | \$309,813                | \$323,603                | \$338,433                |
| Total 2200 · Div 2 (9-12) Regular Classroom   | \$406,445                  | \$416,530                | \$436,023                | \$454,909                |
| Total 2000 · Regular Instruction              | \$708,298                  | \$726,343                | \$759,626                | \$793,342                |
| Total 3000* · Div 1 SPED Regular Classroom    | \$243,043                  | \$246,989                | \$260,027                | \$272,847                |
| Total 3200 · Div 2 SPED Regular Classroom     | \$194,278                  | \$225,031                | \$236,775                | \$247,538                |
| Total 3400 · SPED Administration              | \$72,472                   | \$74,047                 | \$76,668                 | \$78,339                 |
| Total 3000 · Special Education                | \$509,793                  | \$546,067                | \$573,470                | \$598,724                |
| Total 5000 · Student Support Services         | \$118,143                  | \$118,562                | \$123,295                | \$128,254                |
| Total 6000 · IT Network Administration        | \$21,884                   | \$21,884                 | \$22,879                 | \$23,923                 |
| Total 7000 · Food Service Operations          | \$114,911                  | \$116,900                | \$123,243                | \$130,086                |
| Total 8000 · System Level Facility Operations | \$80,854                   | \$82,161                 | \$87,205                 | \$92,694                 |
| Total 8100 · Div 1 (K-8) Facility Operations  | \$76,350                   | \$75,715                 | \$79,501                 | \$83,479                 |
| Total 8400 · Div 2 (9-12) Facility Operation  | \$0                        | \$0                      | \$0                      | \$0                      |
| Total 8000 · Facilities & Maintenance         | \$223,785                  | \$157,876                | \$166,706                | \$176,170                |
| Total 9000 · Transportation                   | \$208,956                  | \$208,511                | \$217,901                | \$227,867                |
| 9900 · Other Expenses                         |                            |                          |                          |                          |
| 9901 · Uncategorized Expenses                 | \$0                        | \$0                      | \$0                      | \$0                      |
| Total 9900 · Other Expenses                   | \$0                        | \$0                      | \$0                      | \$0                      |
| <b>Total Expense</b>                          | <b>\$2,399,056</b>         | <b>\$2,358,613</b>       | <b>\$2,508,674</b>       | <b>\$2,620,178</b>       |
| <b>Net Ordinary Income</b>                    | <b>\$2,718,554</b>         | <b>\$2,496,003</b>       | <b>\$2,688,003</b>       | <b>\$2,816,003</b>       |
| <b>Net Income</b>                             | <b>\$319,498</b>           | <b>\$137,390</b>         | <b>\$179,329</b>         | <b>\$195,825</b>         |

|  | FY23 Budget     | FY24 Projection | FY25 Projection  | FY26 Projection  |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Balance Sheet Considerations</b>                    |                 |                 |                  |                  |
| Balance Sheet Expense: Principal                       | -\$105,962      | -\$47,004       | -\$37,079        | -\$28,167        |
| Balance Sheet Expense: Division 1 Capital Improvements | -\$278,873      | \$0             | \$0              | \$0              |
| Balance Sheet Expense: N/P Town of Harpswell           | -\$10,000       | -\$10,000       | \$0              | \$0              |
| Balance Sheet Income: Division 2/3 Renovation Loan     | \$0             | \$0             | \$0              | \$0              |
| Balance Sheet Income: Fundraising (carry-over)         | \$152,625       | \$0             | \$0              | \$0              |
| <b>Net Income (Cash)</b>                               | <b>\$77,288</b> | <b>\$80,386</b> | <b>\$142,250</b> | <b>\$167,658</b> |

Cash Balance at June 30, 2022 - \$129,504.09

## 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

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.

# Maine Charter School Commission

## Reviewer's Evaluation for a Public Charter School Renewal Application

Reviewer: **STAFF TEAM** (Gina Post, Joe Drago, Amy Allen, Clare Vickland)

Applicant: **Harpwell Coastal Academy**

This rubric is intended to assist review team members in analyzing applications for charter school renewal.

- This analysis occurs after the application has been verified to be complete.
- This rubric will be used by team members to aid in his/her recommendation to the full Commission.
- This rubric is organized similarly to the renewal application and its topical sections.
- Members will review each subsection against various criteria provided in the rubric.
- Based on those criteria, the member will rate the subsection as being inadequate, minimally developed, fully developed, or excellent.
- Each member shall document his/her respective determinations with respect to his/her rating of the subsection.

Inadequate. The reviewer has found that this section of the application lacks detail or raises serious concerns about the applicant's ability to maintain that aspect of a successful, sustainable, high-quality charter school.

Minimally Developed. This section lacks meaningful detail or provides only superficial information. It does not create confidence in the success of the applicant to maintain that aspect of a successful, sustainable, high-quality charter school.

Fully Developed. This section evidences detailed preparation of the application and addresses key issues fully. It provides strong indication that the applicant can successfully maintain that aspect of a successful, sustainable, high-quality charter school.

Excellent. This section evidences a comprehensive understanding and readiness to address the key issues and provides superior detail supporting that aspect of a successful, sustainable, high-quality charter school.

- After all sections are reviewed by each member, the review team will convene to discuss the application and formulate its recommendation to the full Commission.
- The rubric documents may be subsequently referred to by members of the Commission in considering subsequent actions on the application.
- All notes taken on or in conjunction with the rubric, including those on this worksheet constitute a working paper of the Commission and must be preserved in the application file as required by law.
- Members should preserve notes and the rubric during consideration of an application and provide them to commission staff for the application file when no longer needed.

## Looking Back

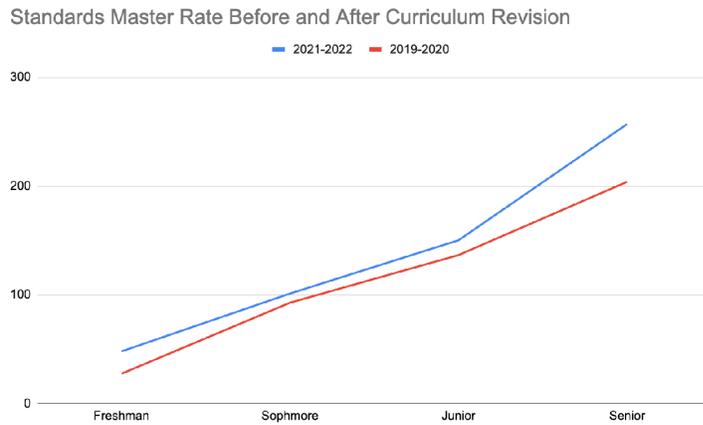
### 1. Academic Performance

| Criteria  | Notes – Indicate where the information was found (self-Assessment, Performance Report, Renewal Application).   |
|---|--|
| <p>a. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, the school has or has not met its performance expectations.</p> | <p>From the Performance Report:</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>HCA met 53 out of 80 (or 66%)</b> targets for which data were available (some data not available due to COVID closure in 2020, some not yet made available by MDOE).</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of academics</b> (proficiency, growth, and achievement gaps), <b>HCA met 4 out of 14 (or 29%)</b> targets for which data were available (some data not available due to COVID closure in 2020, some not yet made available by MDOE).</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of student attendance</b> (chronic absenteeism and average daily attendance), <b>HCA met 2 out of 11 (or 18%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of student enrollment</b> (through year enrollment and current enrollment), <b>HCA met 6 out of 7 (or 86%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of post-secondary readiness</b> (4-year grad rate, 5- and 6-year grad rates, participation in post-secondary activities, success in post-secondary activities), <b>HCA met 8 out of 12 (or 67%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of financial performance</b> (near term, sustainability, audit), <b>HCA met 9 out of 9 (or 100%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of board governance</b>, <b>HCA met 7 out of 7 (or 100%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of facilities</b>, <b>HCA met 5 out of 7 (or 71%)</b> targets for which data were available.</p> <p>Over the past 4 years, <b>in the area of school culture</b>, <b>HCA met 12 out of 13 (or 92%)</b> targets for which data were available (some data not available due to COVID closure in 2020, some not yet made available by MDOE).</p> <p>Given the strong performance on culture indicators, it is unclear why chronic absenteeism rates continue to far exceed state averages.</p> |

The school is seeing a decline in enrollment with 170 students currently enrolled, down from 185 the year prior and significantly down from the charter contracts projected enrollment of 210 students.

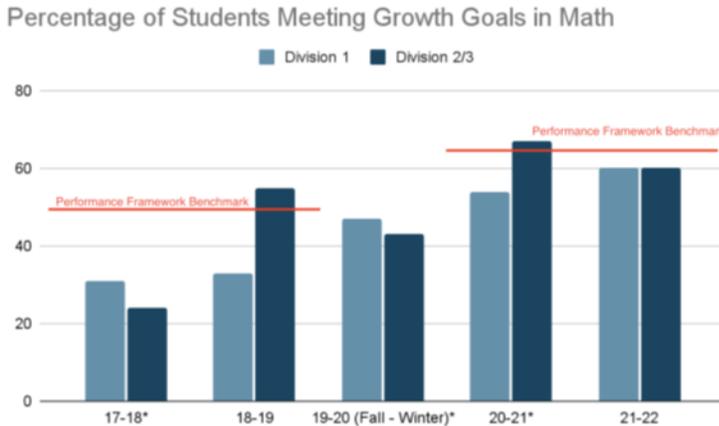
b. Details of academic performance –related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records.  
*Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal Performance Report.*

In its renewal application, HCA provided the graph below that shows standards mastery before the curriculum revision (red line, 2019-2020) vs standards mastery after the curriculum revision (blue, 2021-2022).



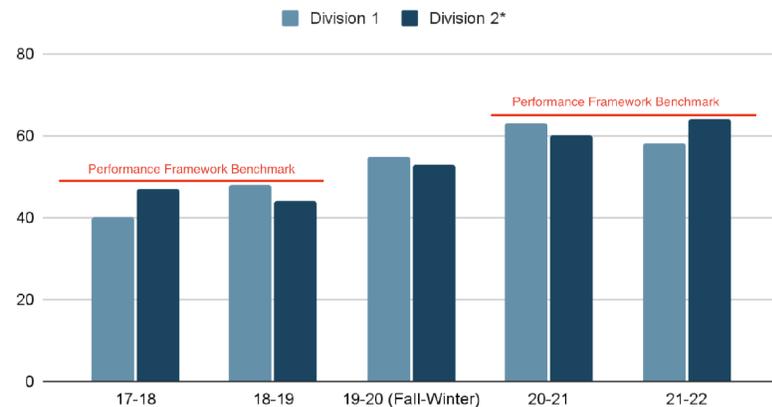
In its renewal application, HCA provided the graphs below that show an increase over time of the percentage of students meeting projected RIT growth on the NWEA MAP assessments for math and language use (reading not provided). It did not include the assessment participation rate for each year. Participation rates below 80% are not considered valid data sets from which one can draw conclusions.

- 2021-22: 81.3% participation rate
- 2020-21: 79.8% participation rate
- 2019-20: participation rate not provided
- 2018-19: participation rate not provided
- 2017-18: participation rate not provided



“The percentage of Division 1 students meeting their growth goals increased consistently from 31% in 17-18 to 60% in 21-22. Division 2/3 showed progress from 24% in 17-18 to 60% in 21-22. Years marked with an asterisk had some grade levels with insufficient data; the data shown is the average of the grade levels with available data. In the 20-21 and 21-22 school years, there was insufficient data for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades respectively, the data show represents the grade levels with sufficient data.”

Percentage of Students Meeting Growth Goals in Language



In the

quote below from the school’s renewal application, HCA indicated strength in the area of achievement gaps with subgroup performance, however, if the overall population has low academic outcomes, one would hope that there would be no gap.

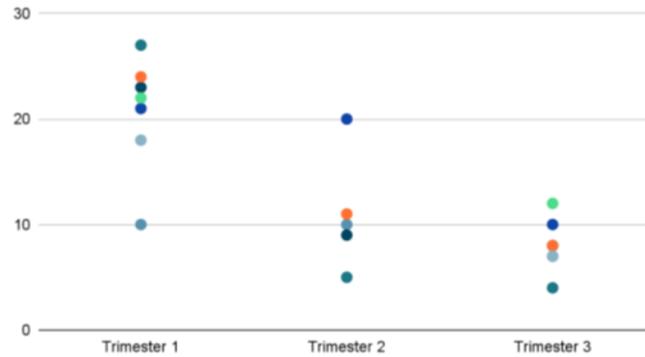
“One area we have been consistently strong is in closing achievement gaps. Our students with IEPs regularly perform on the NWEA as well as or better than their HCA peers. We have continued to pay special attention to the growth and achievement of students with 504 plans and economically disadvantaged students. We have found that over the last four years students in these categories are often performing comparably to their peers as well.”

In its renewal application, HCA provided evidence of 7 students who were chronically absent at their previous school. While they continued to be chronically absent at HCA, they did attend more days of school at HCA than in the previous year (see text and graph below). However, there were 109 students (out of 195 (56% chronic absent overall)) who were chronically absent in SY 2021-22. That 7 students attended school more isn’t a remarkable difference. What about the other 102 students who were chronically absent?

“In an examination of the records of seven chronically absent students who transferred to HCA between 2019 and 2022, all showed an increase in school attendance in their first year at HCA. All of these

students were still chronically absent during the 2021-2022 school year but were attending school 30-85% more by trimester 3 compared to the start of the school year or compared to the previous year's attendance for mid-year transfers. The graph below shows this decrease in absences over the course of the last school year."

2021-2022 Absences of Chronically Absent Students After Transfer to HCA



An analysis of HCA student performance compared to the state performance averages indicated that students at HCA are attaining comparable assessment scores. Given that 40% of the student population is chronically absent, several questions arise from the data including: Is the tested population a representative sample? What supports are chronically absent students receiving in order to achieve similar scores as the state in which only 20% of students are chronically absent?

Curriculum Development

Curriculum has been revised to improve alignment with EL practices and has demonstrated modest improvement in academic outcomes from 47% of students meeting projected RIT scores in Math in 2017-2018 to 59% of students in 2021-2022. A similar, modest increase in students meeting growth goals in ELA was seen during this timeframe. Students are still not meeting expectations for growth in math or ELA.

c. Evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract not already captured in the Renewal Performance report.

From the renewal application: "The academic and social-emotional supports we provide enable our students to leave HCA with the tools and experiences they will need to succeed in the future, whether that is in college, technical training, or the workforce. With the exception of one year, HCA has consistently met or exceeded the expectation on the performance framework for student engagement in post-secondary readiness opportunities. The table below shows the percentage of graduates from HCA's last four graduating classes that participated in each type of postsecondary readiness opportunity."

| Class of: | Early College | Vocational Program | Internship | Total* |
|-----------|---------------|--------------------|------------|--------|
| 2019      | 47%           | 32%                | 21%        | 100%   |
| 2020      | 44%           | 48%                | 19%        | 111%   |
| 2021      | 15%           | 40%                | 15%        | 70%    |
| 2022      | 12%           | 42%                | 46%        | 100%   |

\*Some students participated in more than one of these activities

The following information on building relationships, climate, and community was provided in the renewal application: “The relationships between staff and students that set the school climate are central to building a community where students feel they belong and can succeed academically. Students have reported a steady increase in the quality of student teacher relationships on the Panorama survey: from 63% in 2019 to 73% in 2022. This corresponds to the work we’ve done with EL Education to strengthen our crew practices over the last two years. On our winter crew survey, 90% of Division 1 students reported that they felt included by their crew leader; 80% reported that their crew leader knew them well or very well; and 74% felt they belonged in their crew. At Divisions 2 and 3, the pattern was similar with 79% feeling included by their crew leader and 55% reporting that their crew leader knew them well or very well.”

## Looking Back - Academic Performance

### Strengths

- The school has consistently high rates of participation in post-secondary readiness opportunities with 100% of graduating students participating in the 2021-2022 school year.
- The school has made adjustments in the curriculum to improve alignment with their mission which has resulted in modest increases in the percentage of students meeting projected RIT growth in math and language on the NWEA MAP assessments over time, among those who participated.
- Increased standards completion
- Increases in percent positive responses on some scales of the Panorama Education school climate survey among those who participated.
- The school community is satisfied with the culture and climate of the school which provides a safe and welcoming learning environment for students and families.
- HCA is partnering with Count ME In this year.

### Questions, Concerns

- 56% chronic absenteeism in SY 21-22 (chronic absenteeism=student absent 10% or more of school days)

- Low participation rates on assessments has led to suppression of data making appropriate analysis across the school challenging
- Over the past 4 years, **HCA met 53 out of 80 (or 66%)** targets for which data were available however of the academic indicators, **HCA met only 4 out of 14 (or 29%)** targets
- While there is satisfaction with the school culture and climate, it is unclear if there is a culture of high expectations or rigorous expectations at the school.
- HCA is partnering with *Count ME In* this year. Why wasn't this done years ago?
- How are standards being completed when students are missing so much school?
- Data for 7 students doesn't make a compelling case or demonstrate a representative sample for an increase of student attendance.
- The school places a priority on preparing students for their personal, career, or educational goals however without adequate academic achievement, it is unclear if graduates of the program are leaving the school with required skills and knowledge to pursue their option of choice.
- The school places a priority on preparing students for their personal, career, or educational goals however without adequate academic achievement, it is unclear if graduates of the program are leaving the school with required skills and knowledge to pursue their option of choice.

Address the overall section. These notes may be used at the public hearing to address concerns.

Rate: **(X)Inadequate** ( )Minimally Developed ( )Fully Developed ( )Excellent

## Looking Back 2. Financial Performance

| Criteria  | Notes – Indicate where the information was found (self-Assessment, Performance Report, Renewal Application).  |
|---|---|
| <p>a. The school has provided assurance that it is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits. See Appendix D for Budget years 4-7.</p> | <p>It appears as though HCA is meeting its liabilities.</p> <p>The application indicates that the school is now offering improved employee benefits in an attempt to recruit and retain staff.</p> <p>School has provided quarterly results vs budget and projections. The latest audit received was for the year ended June 30, 2021.</p> <p>FY22 quarterly statements and projection were shared and show the school able to meet obligations.</p> <p>HCA did not provide timely balance sheets; the first balance sheet received for FY22 was for quarter ended March 31<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>However, debt increased and continued need for Line of Credit draws. There was an operating deficit in FY22.</p> |
| <p>b. The Applicant has provided financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information</p>  | <p>The school had a consistent pattern of meeting expectations on financial performance and stability measures however an error in the 21-22 budget, combined with unplanned facility expenses and</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates regarding the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.</p> | <p>low enrollment numbers resulted in an unviable budget and significant financial challenges. The school was able to sustain itself with COVID relief dollars and a forgiven Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan.</p> <p>The school has indicated that it would not be financially viable should this year’s enrollment drop below 170 students on Student Count Day. The school indicates that it will increase enrollment to 190 however no supporting documents or detailed plans were provided to determine if this is a realistic goal.</p> <p>The school raised over \$140,000 last spring to prepare for the consolidation of their two facilities.</p> <p>The FY21 Financial Performance Measures were calculated by the school based on audited results and all met.</p> <p>FY22 Performance Measures will be calculated when the audit is received in the Fall and are expected to show some financial strain.</p> <p>FY23 is budgeted to have a surplus and be able to meet debt service requirements. Liquidity and sustainability measures will likely show a declining financial trend.</p> |
|--|--|

**Looking Back - Financial Performance**

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|--|
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HCA raised over \$140,000 toward the school facility consolidation project</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Questions, Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potential budget strain with continued construction of yurts.</li> <li>● The school relied heavily on one-time funding sources, including PPP forgiveness and fundraising, to sustain itself over the past year.</li> <li>● Declining enrollment brings up concerns about financial viability.</li> <li>● Budgeting error resulted in the need for re-budget mid-year.</li> <li>● School did not have a 3-yr projection which would have aided them in addressing going-concern questions and being timely in decisions.</li> <li>● School ran a deficit in FY22 and added debt.</li> <li>● Hired a school business manager who did not have accounting or accounting systems experience.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Address the overall section. These notes may be used at the public hearing to address concerns.</p>   |

Rate: **(X)Inadequate** ( )Minimally Developed ( )Fully Developed ( )Excellent

**Looking Back 3. Organizational Performance**

| Criteria  | Notes – Indicate where the information was found (self-Assessment, Performance Report, Renewal Application).   |
|---|--|
| <p>a. The Applicant has provided organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliant or other updates relevant to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.</p> <p>See Appendices<br/>           A – Governing Board Turnover<br/>           B - Staff Turnover<br/>           C – Student Turnover</p> | <p>Based on the table provided, governing board membership has been stable.</p> <p>According to the Staff Turnover Table, “HCA has experienced two major staff turnover events during this charter cycle. Both can be attributed to high levels of teacher and administrator burnout.” This is the second large turnover event the school has experienced during this contract term. It is unclear what, if any, lessons learned were implemented to prevent this recent turnover from occurring.</p> <p>15 out of 18 teacher positions were vacant at the end of the 21-22 school year resulting in high numbers of new instructional staff.</p> <p>HCA has historically met it through year and recurrent enrollment targets.</p> <p><u>Governance</u><br/>           The governing board has consistently met expectations in the areas of public accountability by holding a minimum of 6 meetings a year and timely posting of board meeting agenda and minutes.</p> <p>The governing board composition has declined from an average of 8 members to 6 in August of 2022 with 1 to 2 members turning over each year. The renewal report indicates that the school plans to increase their board composition however a recruitment plan or timeline was not provided.</p> <p><u>Facilities</u><br/>           The school has an inconsistent pattern of meeting local and state facility requirements, as well as having current capital improvement plans. This year, the school consolidated its two campuses into one and plans to install yurts on school grounds to provide more instructional space however this work has been delayed leading to crowding in the school building. The applicant indicated that they are hiring an additional contractor to work on the project however it is unclear if this fits in the allotted budget.</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>The yurts will house 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (Division 1) students. It is unclear how students will access the main building for restrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, and library needs throughout the day once winter weather arrives.</p> <p><u>Student Turnover</u><br/> Since 18-19 enrollment has declined from 195 students to a projected 170 students in 22-23.</p> <p>Turnover rates range from 10-29% over the past 4 years with an average of 20.5% turnover between 18-19 and 21-22 school years. This demonstrates that students and families are choosing other educational options and the school has not been able to backfill those seats.</p> |
| <p>b. The Applicant has provided evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.</p> | <p>NA</p>  |

**Looking Back - Organizational Performance**

|  |
|--|
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stable governing board membership</li> <li>● The governing board composition is in line with the bylaws and while membership has declined, it has not dipped below the allowable number of members.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Questions, Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching staff and administration have also seen significant levels of turnover during the charter term making organization stability a challenge.</li> <li>● The school has experienced decreases in student enrollment and high levels of attrition over the past 4 years.</li> <li>● It is unclear if and when the yurts will be a viable facility option to relieve the crowding of the current facility.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Address the overall section. These notes may be used at the public hearing to address concerns.</p>   |

Rate: ( ) Inadequate (X) **Minimally Developed** ( ) Fully Developed ( ) Excellent

**Looking to the Future**

**1. Adjustments to the Performance Framework, if any**

Performance Framework

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Proposed change in application | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change |
|--------------------------------|---|

|      |  |
|------|--|
| None |  |
|------|--|

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| Strengths<br>NA           |
| Questions, Concerns<br>NA |

Rate: ( ) Inadequate ( ) Minimally Developed ( ) Fully Developed ( ) Excellent **Not Applicable**

**Looking to the Future**

**2. As applicable, review proposed improvements to the charter school as it relates to:**

| a. Education Plan – Proposed changes  | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change   |
|---|---|
| i. Mission, vision, identification of targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve | <p>HCA has submitted an amendment request to have 200 as the student enrollment target (with a range of 180-220)</p> <p>No changes to the mission or vision were proposed.</p> <p>The school identified four core values (belonging, compassion, collaboration, and making a difference) during their recent strategic planning process.</p>  |
| ii. Academic Program  | <p>The school has recently partnered with EL to strengthen the implementation of the model and has established a Curriculum Committee to drive the implementation of the EL curriculum. The renewal application indicates that the committee will use NWEA data to identify strengths and gaps in the curriculum. The school also plans to finalize scope and sequence documents and rubrics for each standard; however a timeline for the work was not provided in order to evaluate the viability of the plan.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that weaknesses in attendance and enrollment during the past charter period are representative of national and state trends through the pandemic however HCA’s chronic absenteeism rate is double that of the State of Maine.</p> |

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| iii. Special Student Populations | None  |
| iv. Assessment                   | None<br><br>The application indicates that the school will continue using NWEA MAP 3x/year for students in grades 5-10 and will shift to the Accuplacer for 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> grade with supplementation of NWEA for students who are not meeting readiness standards on Accuplacer.<br><br>This section does not provide a plan for increasing assessment participation rates in order to ensure the data is representative of the student population. |
| v. School Climate and Discipline | None  |

**Looking to the Future - review proposed improvements to the charter school**

|   |
|---|
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further curriculum may strengthen student academic outcomes</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Questions, Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200 is an increase of 18% over current enrollment (170). This seems unlikely given the struggle to enroll students this year.</li> <li>• It was stated by some students, parents, and teachers in the focus group meetings that the school is crowded with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the building. How can it support an increase of 30 students?</li> <li>• Students raised concerns about the lack of a library that met the needs of high school students. Where would this fit if it were to be considered?</li> </ul> |

Rate: **(X)Inadequate** ( )Minimally Developed ( )Fully Developed ( )Excellent

**Looking to the Future**

**As applicable, review proposed improvements to the charter school as it relates to:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| b. Organizational Plan – proposed changes | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change   |
| i. School Calendar and Daily Schedule     | None  |
| ii. Student Recruitment and Enrollment    | From the renewal application: “Moving forward, there are more steps we can take to build stronger enrollment pipelines to HCA from our surrounding communities. Fundamental to this effort is |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>using our students and families as ambassadors for our school by having them participate in enrollment events and public outreach. Featuring the voices and experience of students and families in our social media and press is another strategy for helping prospective students and families see themselves at HCA. During the upcoming school year, our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we will be reflecting on our work and place in the community. Through this reflective process, we will develop clear and consistent messaging to the communities we serve about the valuable experience we offer students. Rebranding will involve focusing on the school’s mission, vision, and values as well as going back to our roots in Harpswell and EL Education. We also intend to make connections with key elementary schools in our catchment area based on geographic location, school model, and grade-levels served through direct outreach to school administrators and guidance counselors, family networks, and student services when possible. Once relationships have been established, we plan to hold annual information sessions and school visit days as well as sharing enrollment information directly through school or family networks. These connections will develop a strong pathway to enrollment in our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.”</p> <p>The school has implemented recruitment efforts throughout the spring and summer which has resulted in 169 students enrolled for 22-23. This number is below the school’s contracted range (189-231) and may impact the financial viability of the school.</p> <p>The school identified consolidation and uncertainty as a cause of their inability to recruit and enroll new students.</p> |
| <p>iii. Staffing and Human Resources</p> | <p>At the site visit, the head of school indicated that there may be a need for an additional teacher for the current 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade cohorts.</p> <p>The application indicates that the school will have a Head of School and Principal to allow for an increased focus on instructional leadership and coaching. A long-term teacher of the school is serving as the Interim Head of School and a new Principal has been hired.</p> <p>5 out of 5 administrators left at the end of the 21-22 school year.</p> <p>The application indicates that peer coaching will be implemented however structures are not yet developed. It may be difficult to implement this mid-year once schedules have been set given that certain teachers will need to have open times in their schedule to observe and meet with their peer partners.</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>iv. Management and Operation</p>        | <p>The school will have a dedicated Transportation and Facilities manager as well as a Director of Business, Finance, and Operations. The new role will allow for the Director to focus on financial management, planning, fundraising, and marketing which are 4 areas where substantial capacity should be allocated based on the areas of need identified. The new hire began mid-September.</p>   |
| <p>v. Parent and Community Development</p> | <p>From the renewal application: “Strengthening the connection of our parents and community members to the work and learning happening in our school building is a major goal for the upcoming school year. In the wake of the pandemic, many families are eager to have opportunities to volunteer and be involved in the school community. The consolidation process led to a renewed engagement with families and community members. We will use the HCA Family Partnership as a driver for organizing volunteers, participating in events like student-led conferences and Celebrations of Learning, and fostering consistent two-way communication between the school and families.”</p> <p>Grant funds have allowed the school to fund a Community-Based Learning Coordinator to support community partnerships. It is unclear if the school can continue to fund this role when the grant ends in the spring of 2023 and what impact this will have on CBL, a key tenant of the educational model.</p> |

**Looking to the Future - Organizational Plan**

|   |
|---|
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plans to strengthen community and family relationships.</li> <li>● The school plans to capitalize on their high family satisfaction numbers to support the recruitment of future students.</li> <li>● The school plans to continue recruitment efforts year-round.</li> <li>● Additional operational staff will support the school in managing oversight of finance, facilities, transportation, and operations.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Questions, Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Given the space constraints, where would an additional teacher teach?</li> <li>● How can an additional teacher be afforded? Especially when next year is funded on this year’s enrollment.</li> <li>● Vacancies and turnover in administrative and operational staff have impacted the school’s ability to meet its goals.</li> <li>● High rates of teacher turnover make it challenging to implement the educational model with fidelity.</li> <li>● The school identified that it plans to increase enrollment however the plan may be aspirational given the decline in enrollment in recent years.</li> </ul> |

Rate: ( ) Inadequate **(X) Minimally Developed** ( ) Fully Developed ( ) Excellent

**Looking to the Future**

**As applicable**, review proposed improvements to the charter school as it relates to:

| c. Governance Plan – proposed changes | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| i. Governing Body                     | <p>The application indicates that the Board will de-emphasize committees, however regular meetings and increased involvement of the Finance Committee were direct recommendations from MCSC in the most recent Performance Report. A summary financial report will be provided to the full board on a monthly basis, however it is unclear if this level of detail will allow for the increased monitoring needed.</p> <p>The Board has developed a plan for more systematic reporting by the Interim Head of School at each board meeting which should lead to improvements in academic, financial, and operational oversight.</p> <p>The Board indicated that they plan to engage in a Strategic Planning process upon charter renewal and has identified several possible candidates to support the work.</p> |
| ii. Governing Board Composition       | <p>The board composition is currently in line with the school’s bylaws and represents a variety of areas of expertise. There are 2 vacancies that they plan to fill and the board has identified gaps they would like to fill with specific skill sets in mind, including having a parent of an HCA student.</p>   |

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Strengths</b><br/>The board recently completed a self-evaluation which it used, in conjunction with recommendations from MCSC, to identify several action steps that should increase the amount of information the board is receiving on a regular basis.</p> |
| <p><b>Questions, Concerns</b><br/>It is unclear how the deemphasis of committees support the sustainability of the board.</p>   |

Rate: ( ) Inadequate ( ) Minimally Developed **(X) Fully Developed** ( ) Excellent

**Looking to the Future**

**As applicable**, review proposed improvements to the charter school as it relates to:

| D. Business and Financial Services<br>– proposed changes | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change  |
|--|--|
| i. Budget  | <p>It is critical that the school increase enrollment in order to be financially viable. Consolidation of facilities should provide some budgetary relief however many other costs, including transportation, utilities, and food services are rising.</p> <p>The school plans to increase fundraising goals based on the success of their springtime campaign, however it is risky to assume that families and community members will donate in large amounts on a regular basis.</p> <p>Major error in prior year</p> <p>School has 3-yr plan that should be carefully updated.</p> <p>Unclear if enough inflation is factored in</p>  |
| ii. Financial Management                                 | <p>From the renewal application: “Moving forward, we plan to increase our annual fundraising goal from \$20,000 (FY20) to \$50,000 (FY23). We recognize that there is more we can do on an annual basis to engage our community in fundraising efforts, from student and family driven fundraising efforts to major gifts campaigns. Our budget projections for the next three years are based on the FY23 and projected FY24 budgets developed last spring. Factoring in five percent increases across most expenses, fifteen percent increases in health insurance costs, and salary increases based on our pay scale, we will be able to end each year with a positive balance with enrollments ranging from 175-200 students. We plan to increase our enrollment to at least 190 students for FY25 and 200 students for FY26. These increases will be sufficient to cover the expected increase in expenses and for some money to be saved for maintenance and upgrades to our campus as needed.”</p> <p>School does not have accountant on staff and continues to need assistance with accounting and accounting system from a board member</p> |
| iii. Facilities  | <p>This fall, the plan is to complete the yurts</p> <p>A Capital Improvement Plan to adapt their current facility, an elementary school building, to suit the needs of their middle and high school student population has not yet been developed but is planned for next year.</p>  |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
|                    | Fiscal risk in operating regular classes in yurts is undefined. School building fiscal risk also undefined   |
| iv. Transportation | Continues to rely on multiple busses and long commutes (at least hour each way)  |
| v. Insurance       | Important to keep Insurance company apprised of off grounds parking and yurts  |
| vi. Food Service   | The application indicates that the school is in the process of contracting with a food service provider. It is unclear if this will be available for students to access in the 22-23 school year or when services will begin.<br><br>HCA now receives Federal funding for its meal expenditures. |

#### Looking to the Future - Business and Financial Services

##### Strengths

- Intention of having a capital improvement plan
- A proposed contract with the Healthy School Food Collaborative would provide lunch options for students.

##### Questions, Concerns

- Projected enrollment on budget projections exceeds the number of students currently enrolled.
- Potential need for fundraising and donations to be financially stable, though the application stated they don't want to rely on it for operating budget.
- Raising the fundraising goal from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Would time be better spent on recruiting 4 students (=over \$30,000) than trying to get donations?
- 200 students seems ambitious when enrollment is only at 169 currently, especially with the location now being further out of the way.

The budget is reliant on increasing enrollment and increasing fundraising dollars which are both uncertain based on the school's recent struggles with maintaining enrollment numbers in line with the charter contract. Additionally, the school had a large fundraising push to support the consolidation effort and it cannot be assumed that this will translate to regular high levels of giving.

The financial management plan is vague and does not provide details as to how the policies and procedures were adjusted to ensure that errors, like those last year, do not occur again.

It is unclear if the current consolidated facility meets the educational needs of the student population and a Capital Improvement Plan has not yet been developed.

Lack of an accountant

Facility risks – both building and yurts- are unquantified.

Lack of enrollment track record. School finances will deteriorate if enrollment continues to be flat.

Rate: **(X)Inadequate** ( )Minimally Developed ( )Fully Developed ( )Excellent

**Looking to the Future**

**As applicable, review proposed improvements to the charter school as it relates to:**

| e.Education Service Providers – proposed changes | Evaluator notes regarding proposed change |
|--|---|
| None   |   |

**Looking to the Future - Education Service Providers**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| Strengths<br>NA           |
| Questions, Concerns<br>NA |

Rate: ( )Inadequate ( )Minimally Developed ( )Fully Developed ( )Excellent **NOT APPLICABLE**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Do you believe that the applicant has achieved the standards and targets stated in the charter contract, is organizationally and fiscally viable, and has been faithful to the terms of the contract and applicable laws? Describe why or why not.

The applicant has not achieved the standards and targets stated in the charter contract, nor is it fiscally viable, and organizationally viable is questionable.

Over the past 4 years, HCA has met 66% of targets for which data were available. In academics, which is the most important area as it is the purpose of public education, HCA met only 29% of targets for which data were available.

HCA does an amazing job at welcoming its students and helping them feel safe, happy, and loved. However, the primary purpose of school is to educate. HCA has been unable to meet the academic standards. Taxpayer dollars are being used to fund a school where more than half of the student population is chronically absent.

HCA is not a financially viable organization. It has struggled to meet the minimum enrollment number it identified to be required for sustainability. As one Maine Charter School Commission member said, “parents and families will vote with their feet.” The feet, that is, the students, are not walking to HCA.

The facility is a 6-classroom school built for elementary students. Students, teachers, and families commented on the crowding of the school, at its lower enrollment number (169). Even if the school were able to enroll 200, as it hopes, this would exacerbate the current crowding. ? There is not a sufficient library for high school students, nor, as reported by students, are there adequate books elsewhere in the building.

The school has made attempts to improve the educational model and instruction however high levels of leadership and instructional staff turnover have impeded these efforts. Efforts to retain staff, including increasing teacher pay and providing additional benefits, have not demonstrated success.

Vacancies and attrition in critical leadership and operational roles have also impacted the school’s ability to implement strategic plans as well as create capital improvement plans to ensure that the new consolidated facility meets the needs of their student population.

Students are not making adequate growth towards, or proficiency on, standards so while students have the opportunity to participate in post-secondary preparedness options through the school, it is unclear if students are adequately prepared for life after graduation. Additionally, low graduation rates have persisted. Data below are from the MDOE ESSA Dashboard.

| SY        | 4-yr grad rate | 5-yr grad rate | 5 & 6-yr grad rate | 6-year grad rate |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2017-2018 | 66.7%          | 65.5%          |                    |                  |
| 2018-2019 | Suppressed     |                | suppressed         |                  |
| 2019-2020 | 73.5%          |                | suppressed         |                  |
| 2020-2021 | 64.5%          |                | 82.6%              |                  |

While students and families report high levels of satisfaction with the school, the academic outcomes of students have been consistently below expectations for the length of the most recent charter contract term.

HCA is not a financially viable organization. It has struggled to meet the minimum enrollment number it identified to be required for sustainability and enrollment growth is ambitious considering the trend of declining enrollment. Should student count not meet requirements, the school would cut expenses related to supplies/materials and professional development. The budget is reliant on fundraising.

Overall Assessment: After a thorough analysis of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the Performance Framework in the charter contract the recommendation for renewal of the charter is:

To renew ( )  
**To not renew (X)**



Harpwell Coastal Academy's Governing Board has applied for renewal of its charter contract. Staff gathered data and information from the renewal application, reports, meetings, and site visits as they relate to the Performance Framework of the charter contract. A thorough analysis of these materials has been conducted.

Based on historical performance as it relates to Harpswell Coastal Academy's charter contract and forecasts based on available data, we do not recommend renewal, as we believe non-renewal is in the best interest of the students and taxpayers of the State of Maine.

**We do not recommend renewal of the charter contract based on the following concerns:**

**OVERVIEW of CONCERNS**

**Financial Viability**

- **HCA is a financially fragile organization.** FY22 results include a deficit, less than 30 days of cash available and an increase in outstanding debt .
- The school reports FY22 **financial performance scores of high risk in cash measures** and this is expected to continue in FY24. Some other measures are projected to score as moderate risk.
- Fundraising is a significant part of the annual cash flow, especially in FY23 and FY24.
- **HCA has struggled to meet the minimum enrollment number** it identified to be required for sustainability and enrollment growth is ambitious considering the trend of declining enrollment.
- Should student count not meet requirements, the school representatives indicated they would cut expenses related to supplies/materials and professional development.

**Academic Outcomes**

- Over the past 4 years, HCA has met 66% of targets for which data were available. **In academics, which is the most important area as it is the purpose of public education, HCA met only 29% of targets** for which data were available.
- The school has a **chronic absenteeism rate of 40%**, double that of the state average.
- The school was founded nine years ago as an Expeditionary Learning school, however the EL **curriculum is still in the process of development and has not been fully implemented.**

**Staff Turnover**

- Significant leadership and teacher turnover have impacted improvement efforts.
- The entire administrative team is new to their positions at HCA this year and **15 out of 18 teaching positions experienced turnover at the end of SY 21-22.**

## Facility Viability

- The consolidated facility is a 6-classroom school originally built for elementary students. **Students, teachers, and families commented on the crowding of the school** with the current 170 students. If the school is able to increase its enrollment, this would exacerbate the current crowding.
- The current **yurt construction project plans to move 2 grade levels outside** to these spaces; however, **students would still need to access the main building for electives and use the restroom**, which calls into question the viability of these spaces during the winter months.
- There is **not a sufficient library** for high school students, nor, as reported by students, are there adequate books elsewhere in the building.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

### **Nonrenewal and school closure of HCA at the end of SY 22-23.**

*Motion: To approve Harpswell Coastal Academy's charter contract renewal as requested in the application submitted by the school.*

## ALTERNATE ACTION

### **Renewal with the following conditions:**

1. **Align Enrollment to Contract Requirements:** Demonstrate evidence of a successful recruitment and retention plan by increasing student enrollment to 200 students by February 28, 2023.
2. **NWEA MAP Participation:** 92% of eligible students will participate in the required fall NWEA MAP assessment administration Nov. 1, 2022.
3. **Curriculum Implementation:** Finalize development and alignment of the EL curriculum and create a plan for full implementation in SY 23-24 by February 28, 2023.
4. **Address Chronic Absenteeism:** Develop and implement a plan that reduces chronic absenteeism to less than 18% by February 28, 2023.
5. **Demonstrate Facility Viability:** Complete a Capital Improvement Plan to address adaptations to the current facility that will make it appropriate for 5-12th grade student use, including adequate water pressure for sanitation purposes, appropriate library spaces, and plans to support students traveling from yurts to the main building by February 28, 2023.
6. **Demonstrate Financial Viability:**
  - A. Submit a balanced budget with reasonable enrollment assumptions that does not rely on unsecured funds (fundraising). Budget narrative should address the impacts to implementation of the educational model based on staffing, professional development, and material adjustments by January 31, 2023.
  - B. Engage a mutually agreed upon consulting accountant to ensure the FY23 QUARTERLY financial statements are properly completed in a timely fashion.
  - C. The school may not borrow on a line of credit or take on new debt of any kind without MCSC approval.

*Motion: To approve Harpswell Coastal Academy's charter contract renewal pending successful completion of the 6 conditions recommended by staff.*



**Charter Amendment Guide  
for  
Amending Enrollment and/or Grade Span**

Please Note – The school’s Amendment Request must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the next MCSC Business Meeting (held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month) in order to make it onto the agenda. In some cases, 3 weeks may not allow enough time for review and schools are encouraged to contact the office with questions.

**Maine Charter School Commission**  
182 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine  
04333-0182  
[www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc)

**Maine Charter School Commission  
Charter Amendment Cover Sheet  
Request to Amend Enrollment and/or Grades Span**

**School Information**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Date of Request</b>                 | 9/12/2022  |
| <b>School Name and Mailing Address</b> | Harpswell Coastal Academy<br>9 Ash Point Road<br>Harpswell, ME 04079 |
| <b>Contact</b>                         | Cynthia Shelmerdine  |
| <b>Contact telephone number</b>        | (207) 607-3663   |
| <b>Contact email address</b>           | cwshelm@gmail.com  |

*Requests to increase grade span **must be received by the Maine Charter School Commission by September 1** of the school year prior to the change effective date in order to allow time for the Commission to review the request and forward changes to the Maine Department of Education for budgeting adjustment before the November deadline.*

**Provide a brief narrative description of the request.**

Harpswell Coastal Academy would like to amend our Charter by lowering our projected enrollment from 210 (maximum 231) to 200 (maximum 220). Two considerations motivate this request: a change in capacity due to our consolidation to a single campus, and the review of our programs and performance that we conducted as we wrote our Charter renewal application. The capacity of our Harpswell campus is 250, assuming a maximum of 25 students for each of our ten main classroom spaces (building + yurts). With the goal of keeping class sizes small and maintaining open and flexible use of additional spaces such as the library, gym/cafeteria, greenhouse, music room, and student support offices, we believe that an enrollment target of 200, with a maximum of 220 is the right fit for HCA in the next five years. Though we are not currently at that capacity, we anticipate that a renewed focus on recruiting will allow us to build enrollment to a target of 200.

Going beyond physical capacity, though, we are interested in setting an appropriate number of students for HCA, so that we can meet their educational and social/emotional needs and ensure their academic success. It is important for the school to remain financially stable and to grow appropriately, but not to the point that teachers and administrators are over-extended and thus unable to sustain/provide the best possible experience for all students. We believe that the right size for this school is in the range of 200 (maximum 220) students. With current staffing, the school can accommodate up to 190 students.

Financially, calculations show that HCA is comfortably in the black with as few as 175 students, but we do not want to adjust our projected enrollment down that far. As we embark on a new Charter period, we believe our enrollment will recover both from the COVID pandemic and from the uncertainties last year concerning consolidation and renewal. The renewal process itself has generated more focus on the part of the administration on the need for better efforts to recruit students. A number of new

tactics are planned, and described in the Special Issues section of the Charter renewal application. Renewal itself will provide a further boost of confidence and community interest.

- o Describe how the amendment request is consistent with the school's mission and vision.

**HCA's 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.*

**HCA's 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.*

In meeting this mission and vision, HCA teachers and staff work with students individually and in small groups, and they guide students in both academic and personal growth. This personal attention is appreciated by students and their families; their feedback to the Board last year particularly cited the safe learning environment, the individual attention from teachers and staff, and the way teachers pushed students toward new challenges. This is the success of a small school setting, and it has enabled HCA to take students who were struggling at their previous school and enable them to enjoy learning and to graduate from High School. Over the last four years, 94% of our students have graduated in 3-6 years of high school, compared to the state average of 90%. This amendment request makes a very small adjustment to our desired enrollment, to put it even closer to the sweet spot that ensures we can continue to serve students at this level while still remaining financially stable over the long term.

- o Describe the need to adjust enrollment and/or increase the grade span. How was that need determined?

While planning our consolidation last Spring, the administration and teacher leaders did a number of projections to calculate the number of staff needed to serve student populations of different sizes, and the cost of providing that staff. As we moved from two campuses down to one, we wanted to assess the right size for our student body, given the mission driven hands-on and project-based education that the school offers. We determined that an enrollment of 200 (maximum 220) was academically desirable and administratively viable. That is not much less than our current charter of 210 (maximum 231), but the change would ensure that even at full capacity, the school could continue to provide personal attention and achieve the mission that defines us. The projections also gave a clear picture of the staffing essential to

this enterprise at various levels of enrollment. We found that the school was financially comfortable with a student body of 175 students and that our current staffing levels are adequate up to an enrollment of 190. Increases above that level would increase our state funding sufficiently to cover staffing increases.

- o Describe the desired results from an enrollment adjustment and/or increase in grade span. This slight decrease strengthens HCA’s ability to provide the small group experience and hands-on supervised learning at the heart of our mission.
- o Provide a table showing the historical distribution of enrolled students in the present grade span, and the projected distribution of students by grade if the amendment request is granted.

| Year    | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Grade 9 | Grade 10 | Grade 11 | Grade 12 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 13-14   | NA      | 33      | NA      | NA      | 24      | NA       | NA       | NA       |
| 14-15   | NA      | 39      | 34      | NA      | 22      | 30       | NA       | NA       |
| 15-16   | NA      | 35      | 31      | 33      | 12      | 23       | 28       | NA       |
| 16-17   | NA      | 25      | 34      | 30      | 37      | 24       | 24       | 25       |
| 17-18   | NA      | 23      | 27      | 39      | 32      | 32       | 20       | 32       |
| 18-19   | NA      | 19      | 27      | 29      | 40      | 35       | 32       | 17       |
| 19-20   | NA      | 17      | 19      | 33      | 33      | 36       | 36       | 28       |
| 20-21   | 17      | 13      | 19      | 21      | 19      | 22       | 36       | 28       |
| 21-22   | 14      | 19      | 27      | 21      | 15      | 21       | 31       | 36       |
| 22-23*  | 11      | 16      | 23      | 29      | 22      | 22       | 18       | 30       |
| 23-24** | 15      | 20      | 20      | 25      | 30      | 25       | 30       | 25       |
| 24-25** | 20      | 20      | 25      | 25      | 25      | 25       | 30       | 30       |

\* As of 8/30/22

\*\* Projected

- o Explain any unique circumstances related to the school’s academic performance and academic growth, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in these areas of school performance.

In order to continue to meet the needs of the range of learners HCA serves and to push the academic growth and achievement of our students, we will continue to invest in professional

development for our teachers. The implementation of new curriculum in math and ELA over the last two years has shown evidence of boosting student achievement on NWEAs in math and mastery of standards in ELA and other subjects (see Looking Back: Academic Performance in our renewal application). We will continue to strengthen our implementation of these programs through in-house and contracted professional development through EL education, Count Me In, MLTI, and the Mathematics Institute of Wisconsin (Illustrative Mathematics).

Success in our classrooms requires differentiation and staff collaboration to meet the academic and social emotional needs of students who have disabilities (25% of our population for 2022-23), who struggle with mental health, and who have experienced trauma at home or in a previous school setting. Small class sizes and the small size of our community are often cited by our students and their families as key conditions for their success at HCA compared to previous settings. Professional learning facilities by EL will continue to build the capacity of our administrators, leadership team, and faculty in how best to continue to engage and support our students as we build our enrollment and waiting list.

- Provide an **action plan** for implementation. Include: a timeline, action(s) to be taken, designated point person, and start date and projected completion date.  
N/A. We will be working to increase enrollment to the projected figure of 200 (maximum 220). Our budget projections for the next three years are based on the goal of 190 students in the fall of 2023, and 200 students by the fall of 2024. In order to meet these enrollment benchmarks, our administration and school counselor will begin building connections to local elementary schools with strong geographic or mission-driven connections to HCA this fall. Building strong and consistent enrollment pipelines to our youngest grades will help stabilize our enrollment and operational plans. We will continue to engage students, families, and teachers as ambassadors to the school at community events. As pandemic-related restrictions ease, we are eager to continue to bring prospective students and community members onto our campus for events, shadow days, and open houses.
- Provide a staffing chart and narrative staffing plan to support the planning and implementation of the proposed increase in enrollment and/or grade span.  
N/A. This is a slight decrease in proposed enrollment, not an increase. Current staffing levels are adequate up to 190 students. We anticipate a slight increase in staffing for 2024-2025 as enrollment rises to 200, to be covered by our budget at that enrollment level.
- Describe the financial resources that are necessary to implement the school's expansion, including the sources of revenue for the successful implementation of the proposed change. Describe contingency planning for potential challenges in cash flow or budget shortfalls.  
N/A. This is a slight reduction, not an expansion. No financial resources are necessary to implement it.
- Provide financial projections for the proposed expansion. Financial projections should reflect both immediate and long-term considerations that have been identified in implementation

**Commented [1]:** Should we refer to the special concerns section of the application for more detail on our enrollment plan? Or include more of an action plan here?

of the proposed amendment. Provide a detailed narrative explaining the financial forecasts, and the assumptions.

N/A. This is a slight reduction, not an expansion. Any staffing increase in 2024-2025 will be covered by our budget at that enrollment level.

- o Indicate if the current facility will accommodate the expansion, or if additional space and/or renovations will be required.

N/A. This is a slight reduction, not an expansion. The current facility will accommodate it. The capacity of our Harpswell campus is 250, assuming a maximum of 25 students for each of our ten main classroom spaces (building + yurts).

## Public Charter School Governing Board Member Information Sheet

Name of Public Charter School: MEVA  
Name of Board Member: Tina Meserve  
Email Address: tina.w.meserve@gmail.com  
Occupation: Commercial Solar Consultant

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Why do you wish to serve on the governing board? Although I no longer work in public education, I want to continue supporting the people who perform the vital work of educating our children and future citizens.
2. What is your understanding of the educational needs of students in the catchment area? Students in Maine need the skills that allow them to become engaged and skilled members of our workforce and communities. They need strong literacy and numeracy skills. They need to understand science and social studies concepts to help solve day-to-day and real-life problems. They need to understand themselves and others, so they feel confident and able to connect and communicate effectively with those around them.
3. Please list any previous or present educational involvement; such as board member, budget committee, citizens committees, etc. List school(s) or district(s).  
**Teacher:** RSU73 1989-1991; RSU 9 1993-1994; RSU 52 1994-2008  
**Administrator:** Each position included service on various Board Committees, including Finance, Personnel, Operations, Curriculum, Educational Policy
  - Augusta School Department - Curriculum Coordinator 2008-2012
  - RSU 16 - Assistant Superintendent/ Superintendent 2012-2018
  - RSU 9 - Superintendent 2018-2020
4. What special qualifications do you have that will help you to be a board member? Knowledge of: Maine curriculum standards, assessment requirements, instructional practices, school finance, Educational policy, labor laws, and the role of school boards. I have 17 years of service as a teacher and 13 years as an administrator, so I understand the challenges facing public education today.
5. What is your understanding of the role you will play as a public charter school board member? As a board member, I would attend all board meetings and vote on issues about the budget, curriculum, staff, students, and policies.

Sign Tina Meserve Date 9/11/22

For your convenience this sheet is located on our website under Resources for Authorized Schools (<http://www.maine.gov/csc/>).

Please see the Maine Charter School Commission's Policy on Public Records.



# MCSC FY23 Budget vs. Actual (As of 10-6-22)

| Summary | Total FY23 Budget | Total Actual Cost | Total Difference |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|         | \$814,171         | \$262,747         | \$551,424        |

## Personnel

|                      | Projected Cost   | Actual Cost      | Difference       |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Staff Salaries       | \$300,200        | \$96,062         | ↑ \$204,138      |
| Manpower Service Fee | \$89,460         | \$28,626         | ↑ \$60,834       |
| Retirement Funding   | \$60,000         | \$0              | ↑ \$60,000       |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>\$449,660</b> | <b>\$124,688</b> | <b>\$324,972</b> |

## Contracted Services

|                             | Projected Cost   | Actual Cost     | Difference      |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Finance Consultant          | \$45,000         | \$16,875        | ↑ \$28,125      |
| Public Relations/Community  | \$25,000         | \$6,375         | ↑ \$18,625      |
| NACSA Project-Based Support | \$30,000         | \$5,700         | ↑ \$24,300      |
| Operational/Finance Support | \$6,000          |                 | ↑ \$6,000       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>\$106,000</b> | <b>\$28,950</b> | <b>\$77,050</b> |

## Projected Annual Revenue

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Allotment                  | \$694,809        |
| Carryover Funds            | \$119,362        |
| Grants                     |                  |
| <b>Total Annual Income</b> | <b>\$814,171</b> |

## Actual Annual Revenue

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Allotment                      | \$579,344        |
| Carryover Funds                | \$0              |
| Grants                         | \$0              |
| <b>Total Annual Income YTD</b> | <b>\$579,344</b> |

## Staff Travel

|                               | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost    | Difference      |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| NACSA Travel and Registration | \$12,250        | \$2,193        | ↑ \$10,057      |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$12,250</b> | <b>\$2,193</b> | <b>\$10,057</b> |

### Commission Member Expenses

|                                     | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost    | Difference      |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Per Diem                            | \$6,050         | \$4,345        | ↑ \$1,705       |
| NACSA                               | \$6,000         | \$1,778        | ↑ \$4,222       |
| Travel to Monthly Business Meetings | \$14,000        | \$1,733        | ↑ \$12,267      |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>\$26,050</b> | <b>\$7,856</b> | <b>\$18,194</b> |

### General Government Service Center

|                | Projected Cost | Actual Cost | Difference     |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Service Center | \$7,529        |             | ↑ \$7,529      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$7,529</b> | <b>\$0</b>  | <b>\$7,529</b> |

### General Operations

|                                | Projected Cost | Actual Cost    | Difference   |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Insurance                      | \$1,000        | \$794          | ↑ \$206      |
| Printing/Photocopying Services | \$0            | \$0            | → (\$0)      |
| Dues and Subscriptions         | \$5,000        | \$2,848        | ↑ \$2,152    |
| Meeting Room Rental            | \$1,000        |                | ↑ \$1,000    |
| Postage                        | \$500          | \$82           | ↑ \$418      |
| Advertising                    | \$1,000        | \$5,142        | ↓ (\$4,142)  |
| Food                           | \$1,000        | \$382          | ↑ \$618      |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>\$9,500</b> | <b>\$9,249</b> | <b>\$251</b> |

### Legal and Professional Services

|                            | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost | Difference      |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Assistant Attorney General | \$11,949        |             | ↑ \$11,949      |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$11,949</b> | <b>\$0</b>  | <b>\$11,949</b> |

### Technology-For Schools

|                               | Projected Cost   | Actual Cost     | Difference      |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| NWEA MAP Test                 | \$13,250         | \$13,250        | → \$0           |
| Panorama Education            | \$10,625         |                 | ↑ \$10,625      |
| Infinite Campus               | \$24,202         | \$24,202        | → (\$0)         |
| Lotterease                    | \$8,000          |                 | ↑ \$8,000       |
| Epicenter                     | \$34,400         | \$33,900        | ↑ \$500         |
| Annual Website Refresh        | \$7,500          | \$3,620         | ↑ \$3,880       |
| College-Readiness Diagnostics | \$4,000          | \$720           | ↑ \$3,280       |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$101,977</b> | <b>\$75,692</b> | <b>\$26,285</b> |

### Office and Other Supplies

|                           | Projected Cost | Actual Cost | Difference     |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Office and Other Supplies | \$2,500        |             | ↑ \$2,500      |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>\$2,500</b> | <b>\$0</b>  | <b>\$2,500</b> |

## Technology-For MCSC

|                                  | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost    |   | Difference      |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|-----------------|
| Office of Information Technology | \$10,800        | \$1,460        | ↑ | \$9,340         |
| Quickbooks                       | \$960           | \$330          | ↑ | \$630           |
| Cell Phone Services              | \$5,050         | \$1,267        | ↑ | \$3,783         |
| Dropbox                          | \$900           | \$420          | ↑ | \$480           |
| Website/InforME-Drupal Access    | \$600           | \$150          | ↑ | \$450           |
| Remote Work for Employees        | \$5,000         |                | ↑ | \$5,000         |
| Remote CART Captioning Service   | \$3,960         | \$3,445        | ↑ | \$515           |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$27,270</b> | <b>\$7,072</b> |   | <b>\$20,198</b> |

## Training-Charter Schools

|                                | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost    |   | Difference      |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|-----------------|
| Charter School Innovation Fund | \$20,000        | \$5,975        | ↑ | \$14,025        |
| Charter School Collaboration   | \$10,000        |                | ↑ | \$10,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>\$30,000</b> | <b>\$5,975</b> |   | <b>\$24,025</b> |

## Contingency

|              | Projected Cost  | Actual Cost |   | Difference      |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Contingency  | \$20,000        |             | ↑ | \$20,000        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$20,000</b> | <b>\$0</b>  |   | <b>\$20,000</b> |

## Sta-Cap

|              | Projected Cost | Actual Cost    |   | Difference     |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|---|----------------|
| Sta-Cap      | \$9,486        | \$1,070        | ↑ | \$8,416        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$9,486</b> | <b>\$1,070</b> |   | <b>\$8,416</b> |