

## Harpowell Coastal Academy 90-Day “Visit” (via Zoom)

On October 8, 2019, the Maine Charter School Commission approved an amendment request from Harpswell Coastal Academy for an expansion to grade 5 beginning in the 2020-2021 school year.

On December 15, 2020, Maine Charter School Commission staff and school liaison met with representatives from Harpswell Coastal Academy via Zoom for a 90-day visit to discuss the school’s addition of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Harpowell Coastal Academy:

- Cynthia Shelmerdine, governing board chair
- Scott Barksdale, Head of School

Maine Charter School Commission:

- Fern Desjardins, Maine Charter School Commission Liaison
- Gina Post, Maine Charter School Commission staff

### Enrollment

The school had projected the 5<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment as 11 students. The actual enrollment for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade is 18 students. The 18 students bring the “Curtis House” (grades 5 and 6) enrollment to 30, which is the number of students the school hoped for in that house.

The school currently has enough space to offer in-person learning with physical distancing to all those who choose it, with some students choosing to learn remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Staffing

Harpowell Coastal Academy did not have to hire new teachers for the new 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The Curtis House has 2 teachers, a humanities teacher and a STEM teacher. One teacher is last year’s 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and the other taught in another house at the school last year.

Each student at Harpswell Coastal Academy belongs to a crew of mixed grade levels. At the 90-day visit the Head of School shared that there were some developmental things to navigate with having grades 5-8 in the crews, and that the 5<sup>th</sup> graders contributed a lot to the school’s climate and culture.

This year, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional bus route was added and there is now one bus route for Division 1 (grades 5-8) and another for Divisions 2 and 3 (high school). It was reported that this is working well and allows for the school’s youngest students to ride a bus separate from the school’s oldest students.

### Special Education

The school has a special education teacher for Curtis House. The caseload is small. Division 1 has a special education percentage of 15%, while Divisions 2 and 3 have a percentage of 31%.

### 504/EL

The school’s social worker (LCSW) spends one day per week at Division 1 and meets the needs of the students who have a 504 or other needs. The social worker spends the other days at Divisions 2 and 3.

### Plans for 2021-2022

Curtis House, like other Harpswell Coastal Academy houses, has a curriculum built into a 2-year alternating model of an A Year and a B year. The school’s teachers, administration, and governing board are in the early stages of planning next year’s B Year curriculum.