



**ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2018-2019**

***The Maine State Charter School Commission will provide thoughtful stewardship in authorizing and monitoring public charter schools consistent with State statutes to create unique, high-quality learning options for Maine students.***

February 2020

In 2019 multipleannounced on-site visits were made to Maine Virtual Academy. The review team held interviews with teachers, students, parents, school leadership, and the school’s Governing Board. They also reviewed data provided by the school. Documents provided by the school are available from the MCSC office. Information gathered from documents, interviews and on-site observation was used to determine the extent to which the school has met its contracted performance targets. This report addresses the school’s performance relative to the performance framework. Attachment A is the site visit report, which includes observation and discussion notes from the site visit.

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| Consultant | Joe Drago, CPA |
| Consultant | Dr. Joe Mattos |
| MCSC Liaison | Laurie Pendleton |
| MCSC Executive Director | Bob Kautz |
| MCSC Director of Program Management | Gina Post |
| MDOE Special Services | Dr. Roberta Lucas |

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| School’s Mission | *Maine Virtual Academy’s (MeVA) mission is to develop each student’s full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high quality learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of alternative educational options. MeVA will develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with specific learning goals to meet each student’s needs.*  |
| School’s Vision | *MeVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will improve student learning outcomes through individualized instruction, as evidenced by student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction. MeVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education and career opportunities. Our graduates will be prepared for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities.*  |

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| School Information |

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| School Name | Maine Virtual Academy |
| Address | 6 Chestnut Street, Suite #230, Augusta, ME 04330 |

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| President | Amy Carlisle |
| Secretary | S. Peter Mills |
| Treasurer | Edward LeBlanc |
| Board Member | Donna Madore |
| Board Member | Kim Whitman |

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| Head of School | Dr. Melinda Browne |

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| Year Opened | 2015 |
| Years in Operation | 5 |
| Number of Sending Districts | 116 |
| Grades Served | 7-12 |
| Current Enrollment | 396\* |
| Students on Waiting List | 293\* |

\*As of October 1, 2019, certified enrollment date

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| Section 1: Indicator Summary Table |

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| **Indicator** | **Exceeds** | **Meets**  | **Partially Meets** | **Does Not Meet** | **Other** |
| **Student Academic Proficiency** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Target 4 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 5 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 6 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Student Academic Growth** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Target 4 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Achievement Gaps** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Post Secondary Readiness** |
| Target 1 |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Target 2 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Target 3 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Target 4 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Student Attendance** |
| Target 1 |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Student Enrollment**  |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Financial Performance and Stability** |
| Target 1 |  | **Healthy** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **Healthy** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Governance Board Performance and Stewardship** |
| Target 1 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Adequacy of Facilities** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **School Climate** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Target 3 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 4 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 5 |  |  |  |  | **Not applicable** |
| Section 2: Demographics |

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| Section 3: Academic Proficiency |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment | 36% of grade 7 students will score proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | 40% of grade 7 students scored proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | Met |
| ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment | 43% of grade 8 students will score proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | 51% of grade 8 students scored proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | Met |
| ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment | 49% of grade 11 students will score proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | 42% of grade 11 students scored proficient on the ELAportion of the MEA | Partially met |
| Math portion of the Maine State Assessment | 20% of grade 7 students will score proficient on the math portion of the MEA | 20% of grade 7 students scored proficient on the mathportion of the MEA | Met |
| Math portion of the Maine State Assessment | 19% of grade 8 students will score proficient on the math portion of the MEA | 20% of grade 8 students scored proficient on the mathportion of the MEA | Met |
| Math portion of the Maine State Assessment | 10% of grade 11 students will score proficient on the math portion of the MEA | 10% of grade 11 students scored proficient on the mathportion of the MEA | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met five of its six academic proficiency targets. It met the targets for percentage of students meeting or exceeding state expectations in grades 7 and 8 in ELA on the MEA. It met the targets for percentage of students meeting or exceeding state expectations in grades 7, 8, and 11 on math on the MEA. It partially met the target for percentage of 11th grade students meeting or exceeding state expectations on the ELA MEA.

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| Section 4: Academic Growth |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA scores in ELA reading and language from fall to spring of each school year. | Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year. | 71% of students showed progress in learning through growth on their ELA NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring. | Met |
| Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA scores in math from fall to spring of each school year. | Students will show progress in their learning through growth in their NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring of each school year. | 74% of students showed progress in learning through growth on their math NWEA RIT scores from fall to spring. | Met |
| Growth on NWEA as measured by projected growth on MAP assessment | School will meet goal of 70% of eligible[[1]](#footnote-2) students will meet their projected growth on NWEA ELA reading and language. | 77.7% of eligible students met their projected growth on NWEA ELA from fall to spring. | Exceeded |
| Growth on NWEA as measured by projected growth on MAP assessment | School will meet goal of 70% of eligible students will meet their projected growth on NWEA math. | 79.9% of eligible students met their projected growth on NWEA math from fall to spring. | Exceeded |

**Discussion**

MEVA met its NWEA growth targets, exceeding two of them. Over 70% of students had growth and nearly 80% met the projected growth target.

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| Section 5: Achievement Gaps |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Achievement gaps in proficiency between major subgroups on the Maine state assessment | The school will provide evidence of closing achievement gaps between major subgroups (EL, special education, gender, ED, 504, ethnic and racial minorities). | Gender subgroup data were analyzed. Other subgroups are too small to report publicly. | Met |
| Achievement gaps in growth between major subgroups on the NWEA | The school will provide evidence of closing achievement gaps between major subgroups (EL, special education, gender, ED, 504, ethnic and racial minorities). | Gender subgroup data were analyzed. Other subgroups are too small to report publicly. | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met both of its academic achievement gaps targets by analyzing and reporting data. For confidentiality purposes data are not publicly reportable due to small subgroup sizes.

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| Section 6: Post Secondary Readiness  |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| 4 year high school graduation rate (current cohort) | Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals:2019- 87.51% | 60% 4-year graduation rate for class of 2019 | Partially met |
| 5 and 6 year average high school graduation rate (previous 2 years’ cohorts averaged) | Schools will meet Maine DOE annual goals:2019- 87.51% | 54% | Did not meet |
| Of students in their graduating year, percent participation in post- secondary readiness opportunities | At the end of their graduating year, 70% of each schools’ eligible students will have participated in at least one post-secondary activity such as (and not limited to) college course, Advanced Placement course, certificate program, or internship. | 81% | Exceeded |
| Success rate of students participating in post- secondary readiness opportunities | 70% of the school’s students who participated in at least one post- secondary activity such as (and not limited to) college course, Advanced Placement course, certificate program, or internship will complete it successfully. | 100% | Exceeded |

**Discussion**

Two of the Post Secondary Readiness targets were exceeded, while one was partially met, and one was not met. The school exceeded the targets for post-secondary readiness opportunities. The school partially met its 4-year graduation data with an increase from the previous year. The school did not meet the 5- and 6-year combined graduation cohort target.

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| Section 7: Attendance  |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Chronic absenteeism | Schools will have 10% or fewer students classified as chronically absent on the last day of school. | 11.83% chronic absenteeism rate | Partially met |
| Average Daily Attendance | Schools will have an average daily attendance rate in grades pre-k – 8 of 93% or higher. | 96% average daily attendance rate school wide. | Met |
| Average Daily Attendance | Schools will have an average daily attendance rate in grades 9-12 of 91% or higher. | 96% average daily attendance rate school wide | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met the average daily attendance target and partially met the chronic absenteeism target with a chronic absenteeism rate well below the state average.

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| Section 8: Enrollment  |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Enrollment throughout the school year | 85% or more of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school will be the same students who were enrolled on state student count day[[2]](#footnote-3). | 86% of students enrolled on the last day of school were the same students who were enrolled on state student count day. | Met |
| Recurrent enrollment from one year to the next | 85% or more of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school will have completed an Intent to reenroll form for the next school year. | 90% of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school completed an Intent to reenroll form for the next school year. | Exceeded |

**Discussion**

The school met the target for maintaining enrollment during the school year. It exceeded the target for students re-enrolling for the next year.

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| Section 9: Financial Performance and Stability |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Near Term Measuresa) Current Ratiob) Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand | School evaluates its Near-Term Financial Health using the Financial Performance and Stability outline provided by the Commission. | Near term measures are healthy. | Near term measures are healthy. |
| Sustainability Measuresa) Total Marginb) Debt to asset ratio | School evaluates its Financial Sustainability using the Financial Performance and Stability outline provided by the Commission. | Sustainability measures are healthy. | Sustainability measures are healthy. |
| The school has an annual financial audit conducted. Audit and management letter are submitted to the commission. Audit has no material findings or misstatements. | Unmodified opinion on [consolidated] financial statements: no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies or reportable instances of noncompliance and other matters identified in the other information accompanying the auditor’s report on financial statements or in the auditor’s report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters. | The school had a clean audit for FY 18. | Meets Expectation |

**Discussion**

The school submitted quarterly financial reports as well as Near Term Measure and Sustainability Measure data. The data were analyzed, and the school was determined to be healthy in both the Near Term and Sustainability Measures.

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| Section 10: Governance Board Performance and Stewardship |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation. | The Governing Board will hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year. | The Governing Board held 12 meetings during the school year. | Exceeds Expectation |
| Public Accountability: Transparent, responsive, and legally compliant Board operation. | Timely publication of Board meeting minutes upon approval. | Board meeting minutes were posted within 5 days of approval. | Meets Expectation |

**Discussion**

MEVA’s governing board met regularly during the 2018-19 school year. Meeting minutes were posted to the school’s website and were submitted to the MCSC after approval by the board.

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| Section 11: Adequacy of Facilities |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Meet Local and State requirements | The school certifies that its facility (or facilities) meet all local and state requirements for public school facilities. | School certifies facility meets requirements. | Meets Expectation |
| Capital Improvement Plan | The school has a current capital improvement plan approved by its governing board. | The school has a current capital improvement plan approved by its governing board. | Meets Expectation |

**Discussion**

The school certified that its facility met all requirements for public school facilities. The school has a current board-approved capital improvement plan for the facility.

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| Section 12: School Climate |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Reporting of behavior incidents | The school will follow the Maine DOE required reporting for incidents of behavior. | Reported as required | Met Expectation |
| Panorama Survey- Family Participation | 40% of families will participate in the Panorama survey. | 83% of families participated in the Panorama survey. | Exceeded |
| Panorama Survey- Student Participation | 65% of eligible students will participate in the Panorama survey. | 80% of eligible students participated in the Panorama survey. | Exceeded |
| Panorama Survey- Teacher/Staff Participation | 70% of teachers/staff will participate in the Panorama survey. | 100% of teachers/staff participated in the Panorama survey. | Exceeded |
| Panorama Survey | Annually, the school will review its Panorama Education results and develop an action plan to address areas for continued improvement. Plan and outcome will be submitted to the Commission. | The school reports it will use the results of this survey to inform an action plan and make necessary changes for the next school year. | Not applicable— School was not required to develop a plan in 2018-2019 school year. |

**Discussion**

MEVA completed its reporting of behavior incidents to the MDOE as required. The school administered the Panorama School Climate Survey in spring 2019. Three indicator targets were exceeded, one was met, and one was not applicable in SY 2018–19.

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| Section 13: Mission and Vision Implementation and Results |

*(See Page 2 for School’s Mission and Vision)*

MeVA serves students and their families who need the flexibility that virtual education affords. This flexibility may be necessary for a variety of reasons including providing time for talent development, accommodating internship schedules and other experiential learning opportunities.

MeVA is striving to improve its academic outcomes, to provide differentiated courses and lessons for diverse learners, and to create opportunities for students to collaborate by offering each other academic feedback within our virtual classrooms. MeVA is working to prepare its students for higher education and careers by facilitating/developing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction.

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| Section 14: Site Visit Report |

**Maine Charter School Commission**

**Monitoring Site Visit Report October 28, 2019**

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| REPORT DATE: | October 28, 2019 |
| SCHOOL NAME: | Maine Virtual Academy |
| ADDRESS: | 6 Chestnut Street, Augusta, Maine |
| GRADES SERVED: | Grades 7 -12 |
| ENROLLMENT: | 395 |
| YEAR OPENED: | September 2015 |

Monitoring Site Visit Purpose

The primary purpose of site visits is to inform authorizer decisions, both imminent, such as assessing a school’s readiness to open, and longitudinal, when a visit is undertaken mid-term as part of routine monitoring.

The purpose of monitoring visits is to gauge the overall progress a school is making toward the goals outlined in its charter. In most cases, the authorizer will already possess some quantitative data about that progress – test scores, attendance rates, and other annual outcomes, so a monitoring visit can help explain the context behind that data and explore the school’s fidelity to its approved program.

Site visits are a mechanism for collecting additional evidence regarding a school’s performance against the expectations memorialized in its contract and contribute to the body of data authorizers utilize to ultimately make renewal recommendations. They also provide staff with the opportunity to review and analyze documentation that may be better understood on-site, such as factors impacting attendance, or rates of academic growth across subgroups. Site visits can also provide a basis for authorizer judgment or intervention where there is limited state assessment data yet available.

Monitoring Site Visit Process

Monitoring Site Visits are based on both the criteria set forth in the school’s performance framework and the school’s alignment with its mission. The categories in the performance framework are student achievement, school climate and family engagement, governance, and finance.

The following participants conducted the monitoring site visit:

* Bob Kautz, Executive Director
* Gina Post, Director of Program Management
* Lori Pendleton, Maine Charter School Commission
* Joe Drago, Consultant
* Joe Mattos, Consultant

The monitoring site visit was conducted on May 30, 2019 at Maine Virtual Academy in Augusta. Team members used the Site Visit Manual to plan for and conduct the visits. Prior to the site visit, team members reviewed documents and other information related to the school’s mission and performance framework.

Key documents and other information reviewed by the team prior to and at the time of visiting included (as applicable):

* School calendar
* Current enrollment and demographics
* Staff roster
* Current organizational chart
* Board meeting minutes
* Board member meeting attendance
* School’s strategic plan
* Current Education Service Provider contract
* Professional Development calendar and agendas
* Staff evaluation tool
* Administrator evaluation tool used by governing board
* Panorama school climate survey results
* School’s self-assessment
* Previous year’s monitoring report
* School’s performance framework
* Copies of current recruitment materials
* Student enrollment application

Focus group interviews were held with groups at the school. Groups were asked a standard set of questions as well as school specific questions created for this visit.

Focus group interviews held by the team:

* Governing Board:
	+ Ed LeBlanc
	+ Peter Mills
* School Leadership Team
	+ Danielle Pouzol, Special Education Teacher
	+ Jennifer Hight, CFO
* Mehry Mohammadi, Attendance Coordinator
	+ Fadia Afaneh, Director of Operations
	+ Jillian Dearborn, HR/Bookkeeper
	+ Stephanie Emery, Administrative Assistant
	+ Nicole Hart, Title 1A Teacher
* Mike Susi, Academic Advisor
* Head of School
	+ Dr. Melinda Browne, Head of School (CEO)/Special Education Director

Monitoring Site Visit Findings

1. Mission Alignment
	* MEVA’s Mission and Vision continues to serve as the focus of teaching and student learning at MEVA. However, evolving conditions and factors are posing significant challenges for MEVA in meeting its mission and vision. These factors include students and parents who are not fully engaged in meeting MEVA’s expectations for student learning e.g. attendance, etc.
2. Student Achievement
	* There was no specific information presented in respect to indicators of students’ learning outcomes as stated in the Mission and Vision Statement. These areas include “demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking skills, problem solving and self-direction.”
	* The Head of School is currently working with teachers to develop rubrics that describe expectations for student learning on Common Core curriculum standards in ELA and Math. These expectations incorporate levels of critical thinking in rubric descriptions.
3. School Climate and Family Engagement
	* This cycle of site visits did not include a spring meeting with focus groups of students, teachers, or parents, as they will be conducted in October with the school’s renewal visit.
* The Panorama Survey conducted at the end of the 18/19 school year revealed the following perceptions of students, parents, teachers and staff. Favorability ratings when compared to nationally similar schools (urban, moderate free/reduced lunch percentage, middle/high schools) are in parentheses.
	+ School Climate: Student favorability 77% (99%) Family favorability 77% (99%) Teacher favorability 83% (99%), and Staff favorability 77% (99%).
	+ Staff and Family Relationships: Teacher favorability 66% (95%), Staff favorability 77% (99%).
	+ School Safety: Student favorability 96% (99%) and Parent favorability 93% (99%).
	+ Student Teacher Relationships: Student favorability 79% (99%)
* MEVA has implemented several initiatives to better engage students in their learning and for parents to help support their child’s learning. These initiatives have included home visits, parent orientations, and online support for parents and students.
1. Governance
	* The Board is comprised of three individuals who have been Board members since the start of MEVA in 2015, and one who joined in 2016. These individuals have varied backgrounds and are skilled in the areas of finance, business, law, and educational programming.
	* The Board is aware of challenges that MEVA faces which include managing the growing operational and educational tasks that need to be performed on a daily basis. At the time of the visit, the Board was looking to add staff for the following positions: Academic Administrator, Assistant Director of Special Education, and Guidance Counselor. Newly expanded space (an increase of 53,000 sq. ft.) has addressed previous facility issues regarding a lack of work and office spaces.
	* Although the Board has not conducted any strategic planning for the past year, MEVA has identified “broad actions and responses” from a third-Party evaluation (White Barn Center for Research), which aligns with MEVA’s ongoing work to improve teaching and student learning at MEVA.
	* Although Board members regularly communicate with each other and reflect on their decisions, there is no system or procedures in place for evaluating the performance of the Board.
2. School Leadership
	* The composition of MEVA’s Leadership Team provides for collaborate and thoughtful discussions related to the effective and efficient operation in meeting MEVA’s mission and vision. Each member of the Leadership Team understands his/her role in helping to achieve MEVA’s student learning outcomes.
	* The Head of School is knowledgeable and skilled in overseeing and managing all of the operational functions at MEVA. However, as recognized by the Board, MEVA needs to provide additional administrative and educational supports for dealing with evolving challenges for improving teaching and student learning, and for effectively managing MEVA’s business operations.
	* Although the Board and Head of School communicate on a regular basis, no formal system has been put in place for evaluating the performance of the Head of School on an annual basis.
3. Finance
* While the financial package is substantial, MEVA should continue to try to improve communications to board members and stakeholders. A written financial summary that is briefed to the Finance Committee and provided to the Board might help increase understanding and discussion.
* MEVA is aware that it has sufficient cash and reliable financial results such that it can increase spending on initiatives in an effort to continue to improve results. In this regard, they are encouraged to continue to model variations of program and personnel spending in support of the school’s efforts to improve results.

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| Section 15: Commendations and Considerations |

**Commendations**

* The school has hired an Academic Administration to focus on the instruction and curriculum portion of MEVA’s program.
* While student academic achievement is lower than desirable, the students have continued to make growth in both math and ELA.

**Considerations**

As part of MEVA’s charter renewal, it was given several stipulations to satisfy prior to contracting. The following are the contract stipulations that must be met:

1. Academic Achievement

While the school’s academic achievement has improved, a few areas of student academic achievement on the MEA (grades 8 and 11 math) have not met the targets in the school’s Performance Framework. The board will develop, and submit to MCSC, a plan to increase student academic achievement across all academic areas.

1. Governance Capacity

Members of the governing board are dedicated and have been with the school since its inception or its first operating year. However, the governing board is small in size and capacity. The board will evaluate its current skills and strengths and recruit additional members to increase in size beyond four members.

While the board provides informal feedback to the Head of School/CEO on an ongoing basis, the board does not have a tool to formally evaluate the Head of School/CEO. The board will develop and implement a plan for formally evaluating the Head of School/CEO on an annual basis.

The board has addressed issues when they became evident. In an effort to be proactive versus reactive, the board will create a comprehensive long-term plan for a select set of strategic educational processes and goals to be reviewed and updated annually.

Because of the growth of the school and increased numbers of staff and responsibilities, the board will assess the overall program and review the various roles and functions of the current staffing to assure that they are coordinated, that the school is appropriately staffed, and that the school has the capacity to achieve its expectations.

1. Data Collection, Usage, and Analysis

Though data are collected by the school and the school’s ESP, the school appears to lack the capacity to carefully and effectively analyze data in a way that allows for data-driven decision-making by the leadership. The school will create a plan for the effective collection and analysis of data to allow for data driven decision making by the leadership and board.

1. Special Education

Though the school employs a special education director certified Head of School and a conditionally certified assistant director of special education, there lacks capacity to continue to maintain compliance will all special education requirements. The school will contract with or employ a Maine certified special education director.

1. Eligible is defined as having both a fall and spring score for students in grades k-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. State student count day is October 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)