

Monitoring Report
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences
August 2014

1. Introduction

The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) was the first public charter school authorized, and the second one to open in the State of Maine, beginning its first year as a charter school in September 2012. MeANS operates with a year-round academic program; its second charter school year ended on August 15, 2014.

MeANS is located in Hinckley, Maine, on the campus of Good Will-Hinckley, situated near the town lines of Fairfield and Skowhegan, on Route 201. The School's initial enrollment of 52 students in grades 9-12 grew to 66 in 2013-14 and is projected to be up to 80 in 2014-15. The students gather from several different communities from across the state. While many of the students live within the school's catchment area (approximately a 30 mile radius from the academy) others are housed four nights a week in a residential program operated by the parent organization, Good Will-Hinckley Home Association.

The school operates on a standards-based program, where students are expected to achieve proficiency levels required to meet the graduation requirements that will be in Maine law by 2016. Part of the school's challenge has been created by the fact that significant numbers of the current students have transferred from other high schools and are expecting to graduate under the traditional credit-based system. Another challenge for the school has been the effort to develop new standards and rubrics for measuring proficiency and growth that are both aligned with the Common Core and can be managed under the school's Personal Learning Plan system, whereby each student advances through the standards at an individualized pace. The curriculum and the instructional program are both imbedded in a hands-on learning approach, utilizing an agriculture and natural science-oriented environment. Along with the hands-on, individualized instruction, the school emphasizes a Restorative Justice program designed to help students develop into self-directed learners responsible for their actions.

2. Process for Monitoring the Public Charter School

The Maine Charter School Commission established a visiting review team of three members accompanied by the MCSC Executive Director and a two-person team from the Division of Special Education at the Maine Dept. of Education. The Commission team conducted one scheduled on-site visit on July 22, 2014. Along with the visit the review team received several documents as part of the review. These documents were delivered prior to the visit, on the day of the visit, and subsequent to the visit. They are on file and the list is available from the MCSC office. A list of the review team is included at the end of this report.

Section 3: Charter Commission Annual Report on MeANS Performance Indicators, August 2014

Indicator and Measure	2014 Targets negotiated in the Contract	Documented Results Reported	Notes and Comments from Monitoring Visits	Outcome
<p><u>Student Academic Proficiency:</u> State Assessments</p>	<p>Students will score within 20% of the state average.</p>	<p>Of 11 students who took the SAT's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 students scored above the state average in at least one area; and had 9 scores in total above the state average • 1 student scored within 20% of the state average on 2 areas • 3 students scored at 29% of the state average or below on 11 areas • 5 students scored at 5% of the state average or below on 11 areas <p>Of the 19 students who took the Maine Science Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 students proficient/partially proficient • 11 students scored below partially proficient 	<p>Incomplete</p>	<p>___ Meets ___ Partially meets ___ Does not meet</p>

<p><u>Student Academic Proficiency:</u> School developed assessments</p>	<p>A. 39% of the student body will meet at least 24 standards at proficient level</p> <p>B. 36% will meet at least 18 standards</p> <p>C. 35% will meet at least 10 standards (should be 25% to add up to 100%)</p> <p>Progress Relative to Length of Time at Means</p>	<p>A. 56% of students have 24 or more standards opened and/or completed;</p> <p>B. 19% have between 18 and 24 standards opened and/or completed.</p> <p>C. 13% have between 10 and 18 standards opened and/or completed</p> <p>Measure needs to be developed</p>	<p>Incomplete – 41% of students have completed one or more standards as of the completion of the third quarter, 4th quarter figures will not be tabulated until September</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><u>Student Academic Growth:</u> Value added nationally normed individual and group assessment</p>	<p>Percentage of students who made one</p>	<p>81% of students demonstrated growth in at least one academic area: math, reading or</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p>

or equivalent for English and Math	year's growth as measured by the NWEA Target Open	language: NWEA projects growth rates for 9 th and 10 th graders only [There are three academic areas tested by NWEA - 6% showed growth in each area, 69% showed growth in more than one area]		<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Established Benchmarks for Each Student	85% growth in one area through NWEA or other evidence	81% of students showed growth in at least one academic area through NWEA	All students in this subgroup closed a gap in at least one area; 4 out of 5 closed gaps in more than one area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Rubric specific to charter school				
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups using ESEA-based system	With a gap of 25% or more, between major student subgroups, we will shrink gap by 50% on an individual student basis.	The largest gap between mainstream and IEP students in any subject area was 22% [Males were the only subgroup that scored below the School's growth mean; in language all subgroups scored above the growth mean; and in math, males scored below the School's growth mean]	All students in this subgroup closed a gap in at least one area; 4 out of 5 closed gaps in more than one area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Student Attendance				
Average Daily Attendance Rate	80%	92%	Over target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets

				<input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Individual Student Attendance Rate	Average will be 80%	10% of students were below the target, 46% were at 95% or higher attendance	Over target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Unexcused Absences	8% of possible days attended	6.85%	Better than target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Recurrent enrollment from Year to Year				
Student re-enrollment from one year to next	85%	96%	Over target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Continuous enrollment of students for multiple years	80%	100%	Way over target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Post-Secondary Readiness				
Graduation Rate	70%	85%	Over target	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets

				<input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Success in Dual Enrollment Courses	75% of students will be successful in their Dual Enrollment Classes	20 of 24 got a C or better on a course = 83% [34 students enrolled in 37 courses. 5 got a B+ or better, 15 got a C or better, 5 got below a C, 8 withdrew from course, and 6 dropped the course (early decision to leave)]	School intends to provide more formal support this year for students taking KVCC classes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
SAT or ACT scores	15% will score at or above state average on SAT	See proficiency data		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Enrollment in post-secondary institutions	75% of graduates have enrolled in post-secondary institutions within 8 months 75% of students taking Accuplacer will pass at least three elements	60% enrolled in post-secondary 60% (6 of 10) passed three core assessments; 91% (10 of 11) passed at least two of the core assessments		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet

Students employed full time or enlisted	15% of graduates employed full time or enlisted by April of 2014	60% currently full time employed	Information from two others needed This is the information on 2013 graduates; School does not have missing information at this point	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
School Social and Academic Climate				
Instances of bullying, harassment or other abusive behavior	15 or fewer incidents or reports of actual or suspected bullying or harassment	<u>Bullying/harassment:</u> Three incidents reported <u>Incidence of substance use/abuse:</u> 14 incidents related to substance abuse, 11 suspected incidents of UTI	There were 21 changes made in the resident program, which has fostered an improved environment. All instances of bullying/harassment and substance abuse/use were dealt with appropriately and in a manner that contributed to improved personal behavior	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
Confidential surveys of parents staff and students regarding social and academic climate	90% of parents, students, staff, express satisfaction with school climate;	<u>Student Survey</u> 90% felt the school was the best fit they have experienced; <u>Parent Survey:</u> Surveys not completed;	30 students took survey; answered 5 of 6 questions on social and academic climate with 80% or more; 97% felt safe; 71% positive about the discipline process. Slow response = 16 parents to date Parents picked the most positive responses to the survey's questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet

		<p>Staff Survey: Surveys not completed.</p>	<p>at least 80% of the time for each question</p> <p>To date staff surveys indicate satisfaction with school climate, especially in the area of social/emotional growth, and safety. Positive responses academic growth and respectful behavior. All other questions answered at a higher than 80@ positive rating</p>	
<p>Emotional and social growth of students</p>	<p>80% will report growth as reported by pre and post Gallup Poll Hope Survey</p> <p>SPECIAL NOTE: Survey only given once a year so target needs adjusting</p>	<p>Sense of hope:</p> <p>43% hopeful, 27% stuck, 30% discouraged</p> <p>Being Engaged:</p> <p>56% engaged</p> <p>Well-being:</p> <p>43% thriving, 57% struggling, 0% suffering</p>	<p>9th graders more hopeful and engaged than 11th graders than 12th graders; 11th graders have the highest sense of well-being of the three grades; 92% agreed that there was an adult in their lives who cares about their future</p> <p>These survey items are all positive measures of school climate, they are worse than last year's scores but are better than the national norm</p> <p>No one reports suffering, however perceived health problems are</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p>

	<p>School Records of Restorative Justice Involvement</p> <p>(no target established)</p>	<p>18 students participated in 24 restorative meetings leading to 13 agreements</p>	<p>twice the national norm</p> <p>The three most frequent problems dealt with in these meetings were disrespect, being “out of area”, i.e. not following the daily schedule, and peer respect. 71% of students surveyed expressed satisfaction with the discipline process.</p>	
<p><u>Financial Performance and Sustainability</u></p>	<p>The school will produce monthly and quarterly financial reports and provide evidence that the reports are reviewed by the Governing Board. Quarterly reports to be sent to Commission for its files and review.</p>	<p>The Commission received quarterly reports and meeting minutes showing Governing Board review of financial statements dated July 31, 2013, December 18, 2013, January 22, 2014, and April 25, 2014.</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p>

	An annual financial audit is conducted and a report sent to Commission , with MeANS” response to all management findings and recommendations.	MEANS did have an audit conducted for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. All management findings and recommendations have been addressed.		
<u>Governance Board Performance and Stewardship</u>	Public accountability – Transparent, responsive and legally compliant Board Operation Oversight of school leadership team	The Review Team of the Commission has met with several members and officers of the Board. The Board meets monthly and maintains strong working relationships with senior administrative staff and the parent organization’s (GWH) board. The Board contributes its time and talents to the improvement of the school. Oversight of the leadership was discussed.	Board minutes and agendas are available but access could be improved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
<u>Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program</u>	The School will provide an annual update on the capital improvement	Exec. Director Glenn Cummings provided an update on plans to renovate Moody Building for use as a school facility. A capital plan for all other GWH facilities (includes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets

<p><u>Transportation</u></p>	<p>plan for providing facility upgrades to support expanded enrollment.</p> <p>School will provide transportation for day students within catchment area, either through contracts with other providers or the school's vans</p> <p>The school will participate in</p>	<p>the current school used facilities) was also given to the Commission.</p> <p>The current school facility is fully utilized, as it is temporary space awaiting the development of an updated newer facility. The buildings appeared to be clean, Part time positions for 2 students were created to assist with the upkeep of the facilities. One of the Heads of School serves on GWH Safety Committee which meets monthly and deals with any maintenance issues. A GWH Building and Grounds Committee meets monthly.</p> <p>A monitoring report provided by MEANS. The school contracts with an SAU in the area. Pick up sites are evaluated every 3 months.</p> <p>The food service program provided</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p>
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<u>Food Services</u>	the National School Lunch Program and provide an appropriate breakfast and lunch for eligible students through GWH	a monitoring report. The program was under budget last year and on target this year to do the same. Students participate in the program either as interns, paid part time workers, a work study program, as well as growing food for the program in the schools agriculture program. Ingredients for the meals are locally sourced and grown on campus. Commission members had a tasty and nutritious lunch while on site. The program is well run and all take pride in it.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
<u>Educational Partnerships in the Community</u>	No specific target for the number of partnerships was established in the contract	Partnerships have been established this year with the following: Kennebec behavioral Health; Cornerstones Counseling, Skowhegan Career Center, Caverly's Farm, Cornville Regional Charter School, etc.	Community volunteers and organizational partners were well represented among the participants at the Commission's on-sight visit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
<u>Parent Communication Systems</u>	Weekly communications between advisor and family.	All parents are contacted weekly by student-advisor by phone or email weekly	Parents present at the Commission on-sight visit reported regular and helpful communications.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet
<u>Parent participation in their children's education and operation of school</u>	90% parent/guardian participation in student-led	100% of parents attended at least one student led conference 60% of parents have participated in a school sponsored activity.	Target exceeded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet

	<p>conferences</p> <p>60% of parents participate in school sponsored activities</p>	<p>33% (22 Of 67 potential participants)</p>	<p>Target not met.</p> <p>MEANS administration noted the high level of communication and the relative distance from student's homes as factors that seem to cause the lower participation rate.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially meets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet</p>
Other Requested Information	Academic Discipline reports	No target set	No expulsions or suspensions	

Summary

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Meets Contract agreement</i>	<i>Partially meets</i>	<i>Does not meet</i>
Student Academic Proficiency		Incomplete	
Student Academic Growth	X		
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups	X		
Student Attendance	X		
Recurrent Enrollment from Year to Year	X		
Postsecondary readiness		X	
Financial Performance and Sustainability	X		
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	X		
Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program	X		
School Social and Academic Climate		X	
Parent and Community Engagement		X	

4. Commendations

1. As was true a year ago, the School was well prepared for the visit, providing some of the documentation ahead of the visit and arranging for the availability of parents, board members, partners, teachers and students for the focus group.
2. Parents continue to exhibit strong support, enthusiasm and appreciation for the School. Observations included, *Students are treated as individuals and respected for their uniqueness... My son was able to design a course around a topic he was interested in and there was a teacher qualified and ready to teach it.*
3. The student attendance rate continues to be excellent.
4. We commend the School for addressing last year's residential life concerns by hiring a new Director of Student Life and developing a 21-point plan to strengthen the residential program and

thus improve the climate within the School as well as enhance communication between the School and residential staff.

5. We continue to commend the School for laying a solid fiscal foundation aimed to put the School in a healthy and sustainable long-term position. The close collaboration with Good Will Hinckley has been and will continue to be essential to realizing this outcome. That collaboration is outlined in the strategic planning document, *A Past to Preserve – A Future to Build*. The plan's centerpiece is an impressive academic facility, the renovated Moody building, that will enable the School to house its optimal enrollment of 210. At capacity, the School is projected to generate a healthy fund balance reserve from operations.
6. We commend the efforts that resulted in a \$500,000 federal grant to be used for professional and technology development.
7. We applaud the success of the new Greenhouse program.
8. The School continues to make impressive progress in meeting the needs of the growing special education population.
9. We commend the School for placing strong emphasis on staff development, evidenced by the teacher development program initiated by board member Gordon Donaldson and the pursuit and receipt of a generous federal grant to support professional development.
10. We commend the School for exceeding the recurrent enrollment targets, which demonstrates strong family support.
11. We continue to be impressed with the governing board, measured in part by the time and talents devoted to improving the School in a variety of ways.
12. The student-led conferences continue to be highly valued, evidenced by the high participation rate and many positive comments from students and parents.
13. We commend the School for continuing to collaborate effectively with a growing list of community partners.
14. The accessibility and use of Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) programs is a major asset for the School in addressing a longstanding issue in Maine, motivating students to continue their education beyond secondary school.
15. We commend the School's mentoring program in collaboration with the Cornville Regional Charter School.
16. We commend the School for addressing the need to expand the breakfast program to include all students.

5. Recommendations

- A. We encourage the school to continue to seek additional sources of funding beyond the Good Will-Hinckley Foundation as part of its effort to achieve long-term financial stability.
- B. The Commission applauds progress-to-date in implementing a proficiency-based academic system with clear record keeping showing student attainment of standards and urges the School to keep the initiative as a high priority.
- C. Continue the search for and implementation of a replacement for the Project Foundry software.
- D. We urge the School to further its effort to appropriately integrate technology into the curriculum, which the federal grant offers the wherewithal to accomplish.

- E. Develop a plan for accommodating the students if the new classroom building is not ready for occupancy in 2015, the deadline for vacating the current facility.
- F. Continue the effective application of the school's restorative justice program by providing more staff training.
- G. Continue staff development to support the differentiation of instruction to achieve increased student attainment of the learning standards.
- H. The School is encouraged to participate in live trainings and webinars offered by the MDOE Department of Special Services, including aligning IEP goals with the Common Core state standards, LRE and transition planning.
- I. The School is urged to continue to strengthen the delivery of special education services as needed.
- J. Continue to use evidence-based practices to improve reading and writing skills for students whose IEPs require direct instruction in those areas.
- K. Develop a plan to maintain the qualities of a small school environment and the ability to address the needs of all students as enrollment grows and staff expansion and turnover occur.

SPECIAL NOTE: THE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION'S ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS PROMPTED A DECISION TO EXAMINE SEVERAL INDICATORS IN THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TO CLARIFY INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS NEEDED (E.G., ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY).

6. Closing Summary

In our estimation the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences continues to demonstrate success and make progress in achieving its goal:

Our goal is for every MeANS student to become an engaged, reflective, and self-directed learner. We help students develop habits of heart and mind that lead them to take responsibility for their own actions, as well as for the welfare of other students, their community and their environment. Students will grow as critical thinkers and creative problem solvers. They will complete their education more hopeful and healthy than when they enrolled, and they will have a plan for their next steps as young adults including further education, training, adventure, civic engagement and work.

Our confidence in the School's long-term prospects for sustainable success is based, in large measure, on the Board and staff's unswerving commitment to continuous improvement as evidenced by our experience with them the past two years.

Review Team Members

- John Bird, Chair (Maine Charter School Commission member)
- Nichi Farnham (Maine Charter School Commission member)
- Jana LaPoint (Maine Charter School Commission member)
- Robert Kautz (Maine Charter School Commission Executive Director)
- Peg Armstrong (Maine Department of Education – Special Education Division)
- Anne D'Alonzo (Maine Department of Education – Special Education Division)