

# Application for Renewal of a Public Charter School

Submitted By:



11 Goldenrod Lane  
Sidney, ME 04330  
(207) 618-8908

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Governing Board Approval Date: September 2, 2020

Application Submission Date: September 3, 2020

## **Renewal Application Form**

Name of public charter school:	Maine Arts Academy
Name of entity that holds charter:	Maine Arts Academy
Name/Title of primary contact person:	Heather King - Head of School
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Email Address:	<a href="mailto:hking@maineartsacademy.org">hking@maineartsacademy.org</a>
Physical Address of school:	11 Goldenrod Lane, Sidney, ME 04330
School's initial opening date:	September 6, 2016
Current grades enrolled:	Grades 9 - 12
Grade levels to be served per current Charter Contract:	Grades 9-12
Maximum projected enrollment per current Charter Contract:	216
Proposed grade levels to be served at full enrollment for second charter term:	Grades 9-12
Proposed maximum projected enrollment at full growth for second charter term:	240

### **Renewal Application Certification**

Head of School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: Heather King

Board Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: Janna Townsend

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#### **IV. Introduction to the School**

**Table A**  
**Introductory Information**

Year Opened	2016	Current Enrollment	201
Maximum Enrollment	240	Current Grade Span	9 - 12
Chartered Grade Span	9 - 12	Students on Waitlist	0

Maine Arts Academy (MeAA), located in Sidney, opened for the 2016-17 school year as a performing arts public charter high school that integrates the power of the arts with a rigorous academic experience. In 2018, MeAA expanded to include visual and creative arts. All students participate in a full academic schedule and daily performing arts and/or visual arts courses. Maine Arts Academy educates students from over 30 districts and 75 towns across the state.

Maine Arts Academy seeks to be a haven of safety in a positive and aspirational climate where students are encouraged to explore and reach their fullest potential. The school’s collaborative environment fosters independent thinking and learning. A core curriculum includes rigorous academics and a commitment to community. Students excel in performance-based experiences through mentoring and peer relationships. MeAA students receive a balanced, inclusive and accessible education and develop confidence, a sense of purpose and belonging in a supportive community.

In the midst of the COVID pandemic that began in full-force during SY 2020, MeAA preserved all of its educational programs and services through live online delivery. This format provided students and staff with the daily structure, interpersonal support, and academic instruction integral to a high-quality education.

## V. Executive Summary

**Table B**  
**2019-2020 Enrollment and Demographic Information**

Number of Students Enrolled	201
Number of Students on Waiting List	0
Number of Male Students	60
Number of Female Students	141
Number of White Students	180
Number of Black Students	6
Number of Hispanic Students	12
Number of Asian Students	3
Number of Other Students	4
Number of Students with Disabilities	56
Number of English Language Learners	0
Number of Homeless Students	1
Number of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	86

### **Current Mission**

Maine Arts Academy aims to transform students' lives and contribute to the cultural capital of Maine by providing high quality, comprehensive, college preparatory academic and arts education in an inclusive, nurturing, and culturally rich environment for high school age students.

### **Current Vision**

Maine Arts Academy will serve as a center of excellence for both academic and arts learning in Maine. Maine Arts Academy looks at education as both the accumulation of knowledge along with the cultivation of engagement, imagination, leadership and collaboration. Through the initial introduction of music, theater and dance and ultimately the inclusion of all the creative and

visual arts, Maine Arts Academy will be a witness to the magical power of the arts to bring people together, to create an engaged vibrant community and to cultivate the traits that are so vitality important in the next generation of citizens. As a community of engaged learners, Maine Arts Academy will develop more than musicians and artists, but also responsible, joyful, contributing citizens. In this way, and by ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the exposure to performing and creative arts, hiring talented arts educators who bring their expertise to Central Maine and further collaborating with other educational, arts and cultural organizations, Maine Arts Academy will become an integral part of the community and a much needed beacon for the arts.

### **New Proposed Mission**

“Providing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and well rounded arts education to enrich the lives of our high school students.”

### **New Proposed Vision**

“Nurturing the next generation of leaders to become invaluable citizens at the heart of Maine’s cultural, economic and social well being.”

### **Educational Program**

Faculty members construct standards-based units, lesson plans and assessments around the Maine Learning Results and the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core focuses on developing the critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills students will need to be successful ("The Common Core State Standards Initiative," 2015). Additionally, arts classes use the National Arts Standards to guide curriculum content. Introductory and honors leveled courses are offered in nearly all subject areas. Students are encouraged to take dual enrollment college courses during their junior and senior years. Typically, when on campus full time, arts courses are offered five days per week with the Tuesday/Thursday classes designed to extend instructional time for more advanced and in-depth course work. After exposure to multiple introductory arts courses, all learners audition for their selected art pathway at the end of their freshman (or first) year at MeAA.

### **Community and Local Connections**

Community and local connections have flourished over the past four years. Student learning opportunities have been established with Colby College, Dartmouth College, University of Maine at Augusta, and Kennebec Valley Community College. Enrichment and employment connections have been made with Friends of Messalonskee, Snow Pond Community Music School and Alford Youth Center. MeAA has collaborated with other central Maine schools including Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, Cornville Regional Charter School and James Bean School of RSU 18. Other established community partnerships support students, including Ann Ervin, Gallant Services, The Instrument Exchange, Snow Pond Center for the Arts, and both Kennebec Valley and Mid-Maine Chambers of Commerce. Student art is showcased at numerous venues throughout Waterville and Hallowell.

## **Leadership**

The Maine Arts Academy Charter School Board selects, supports and reviews the performance of the Head of School. The Board determines and monitors the school's programs and services, governing which educational programs and services are the most consistent with the charter school's mission. The Board ensures that the school is effective in achieving its mission and efficient in using its resources. The Bylaws provide for a minimum of 3 directors and a maximum of 15. Maine Arts Academy's board currently consists of 7 directors. The board has participated in recent workshops offered by the Maine Charter Commission to help guide them in leading with impeccable board stewardship. Key management roles align in part with the vision set forth prior to year one. The Head of School continues its role as it was originally described and is currently responsible to ensure and maintain the school's mission, purpose, philosophy, and standards, as established by the Board of Directors of Maine Arts Academy.

Instructional leadership and curriculum development and implementation remain the responsibilities of the Head of School, supported by the Assistant Head of School, Music Director and classroom teachers. Personnel decisions, facilities management, legal compliance, and special staffing needs are managed by the Head of School with the support of the Assistant Head of School. Accountability for budgeting and financial management is shouldered by the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and the finance department.



## **VI. Looking Back: The Record of Performance**

### **1. Academic Performance**

- a. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether or not the school has met its performance expectations.

Educational programming at MeAA is consistent with its original charter and includes core academic courses while emphasizing multifaceted, leveled courses in visual art, theater, voice, photography, film, dance, and numerous instrumental courses including chorus, band, strings, guitar, piano, and percussion. Offerings include a full range of secondary academic courses and dual enrollment college classes through a variety of post-secondary training and education institutions, such as University of Maine at Augusta, University of Maine at Fort Kent, University of Maine at Machias, Colby College and Kennebec Valley Community College.

A summary of student academic performance results SY 2018-19 show:

- 65% of students performed at or above the state expectations in English/Language on the SAT.
- 52.1% of students performed at state level on the MeAA Science test.
- 22.9% of students performed at the state level on the Math portion of the SAT.

The school implemented several strategies aimed at addressing academic proficiency:

- Providing Title I targeted in-class support and tutoring services in math.
- Adding a part-time math teacher, which allowed for multiple sections of most math courses to be offered and improved student/teacher ratios.
- Refining the Response to Intervention program in all subject areas to enhance student academic progress.

Freshman and sophomore students establish personal learning goals that are informed by NWEA testing results, as well as other data points. Each year, the school conducts NWEA testing in the fall and spring. This year, winter NWEA tests were conducted for students performing below grade level and for students who had missed the fall testing session. Winter testing results indicated higher achievement and higher growth in both math and reading, and higher achievement and lower growth in language usage. It is important to note that 2020 spring NWEA testing was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- b. Academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records.

Supplemental performance-related evidence is captured in part by feedback obtained from students' families:

*"She felt safe, heard, understood, and loved at school. What more could a parent ask for? Not only are you and your staff dedicated to providing an enriching academic and artistic environment, you all do so with joy and grace ... We will miss this school, even the long car rides. It was worth every drop of gas! Thank you does not seem like enough. In some ways, I feel that you 'saved' (student), perhaps not literally, but spiritually. Under the gentle guidance of you and your staff, she was free to become the person she was meant to be."*

*"We are so very thankful with all that MeAA has done and continues to do!! You did not miss a beat at getting things started online and keeping the schedule consistent with how things were done at school has been pivotal! We appreciate the consistent communication and keeping us parents up-to-date with all of the changes and current information. Our family is beyond grateful for the many extra hours that the staff has put in to make all of this happen! We feel blessed to be a part of the MEAA community during this uncertain time!"*

*"The last two years (she) has gotten up and out the door by 5:40 to make the bus 30 mins. away and then drive the hour and twenty minutes to and from school everyday. Why? Because she would not have received the education and the ability to have the music classes and dance classes that she has at MeAA, and to explore different types of classes offered. I feel the teachers are allowed to teach the way they want to and their passion shows. (She) has grown into the strong, independent, free thinking person that she is because of the way she has been educated and the opportunities that she has been given."*

These comments are a small representation of the overwhelming support families have offered and provide additional evidence of the positive impact MeAA is having for many students.

- c. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any mission-specific academic goals and measures established in the charter contract (if not already captured in Renewal Performance Report).

Specific to the school's current mission and the requested amended new vision is the demand for the school to contribute to the cultural capital of Maine by providing high quality, comprehensive, college preparatory Academic and Arts education. In an increasingly global society, successful students have an appreciation and respect for diversity and an acknowledgment of the impact of culture and social experience on learning which are embedded in the curriculum. Students are expected to develop cultural competence, leadership skills, and socially sensitive skills through exposure to a rigorous preparatory curriculum and a well rounded arts education.

Outcomes of these goals are evidenced by the achievements of current students and alumni. Ninety percent of graduating seniors continue on to college. One hundred percent of graduating seniors continue on to pursue personal aspirations, many of whom follow opportunities in travel, music, or art.

Student work, talents and skills are displayed in many locations and events throughout central Maine. Students participate in public performances such as our Ten Minute Play Festival and recitals. Students write, direct and produce their own One-Act plays and perform them for the community annually. Underclassmen display their visual and three-dimensional art in multiple community venues, such as restaurants and businesses throughout Waterville, Hallowell, and Augusta. Chamber singers perform locally for residents at Woodlands Senior Living in Waterville and have performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City. MeAA visual art students created and shared a virtual show focusing on mental health. Band and chorus members participate in All-State and KVCC music festivals. Additionally, MeAA band members traveled to Six Flags Music Festival to perform. Students display their bright contributions eagerly and openly, often collaborating and discovering more opportunities for community outreach and involvement.

Additionally, Head of School Heather King recently received recognition from Healthy Communities of the Capital Area. Heather King was granted one of only three statewide awards for her work with high school students preventing tobacco and substance abuse and addiction. Implementing programs like this into the school's programming further exhibits MeAA's mission-specific goal of contributing to the collective well-being of Central Maine.

## **2. Financial Performance**

- a. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.

MeAA is fiscally healthy and is meeting all current obligations including payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits. A host of internal processes ensure ongoing fiscal monitoring, including information provided to board members each month for discussion and analysis (balance sheet, profit and loss year-to-date, comparative profit and loss year-to-date, and budget v. actual year-to-date).

- b. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records. Please complete the budget template, Appendix D.

In 2018, the school applied for and was awarded a three-year U.S. Department of Education charter school planning grant (\$659,000), which has provided significant resources during the school's start-up phase. Maine Arts Academy is one of three charter schools in Maine to receive this funding.

Please see **Appendix D** for the budget template.

### **3. Organizational Performance**

- a. Provide any organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data or contextual information that may not be captured in authorizer records.

The school will be implementing a few changes in the upcoming school year. School will open with a hybrid schedule that is responsive to COVID-related concerns while maximizing student learning. Two student cohorts were created based where each cohort will attend in-person and online on alternate days. Previous plans to increase instructional time on Fridays have been temporarily suspended in order to limit on-campus traffic. As an alternative, the school has incorporated time for extra student academic and social/emotional support, arts practice and rehearsal time, and an expanded Response to Intervention block. Students also have the option to attend through a 100% remote learning experience. Every classroom is now equipped with distance learning hardware technology that is important for providing high-quality remote instruction. Students will have more resources, including e-books and music apps. These changes, in addition to organized communication with students and families, have been instrumental to student retention. In addition, expanded interest from prospective students has continued to increase during August, 2020.

- b. Provide evidence of outcomes related to any school-established organizational goals, as appropriate.

Staff retention remains high. A professional development team was created and a framework of guidelines now supports faculty by encouraging growth and advancement. School leaders drafted individual job descriptions that were reviewed by the Academic Excellence Committee and the Governance Committee before receiving Board approval. Job descriptions clearly outline the duties, responsibilities and expectations for a variety of positions.

## **VII. Looking to the Future**

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

Describe and state the rationale for any proposed changes in targets for the performance indicators as stated in the existing contract.

2. Describe, if applicable, plans to change the school's current model as it relates to the topics below. Include a timetable for implementation. Substantive changes, including, but not limited to, grade span served, program delivery, or target population will require additional data analysis and research-based evidence after the initial charter is renewed.

#### a. Education Plan

- i. Mission, Vision, Identification of targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve.

The school is currently working to revise its mission statement and is seeking approval from the Charter Commission. (See page 3 for proposed statements.)

- ii. Academic Program - no changes
- iii. Special Student Populations - no changes  
Assessment - no changes
- iv. School Climate and Discipline - no changes

#### b. Organizational Plan

- i. School Calendar and Daily Schedule - Our daily schedule now runs from 8:00 to 3:00 Monday through Thursday and 8:00 to 12:00 on Fridays. MeAA now joins other area high schools for February and April vacations and no longer takes a two-week break in March. When the school first opened, arts and academics were separated by morning and afternoon.

Presently, both arts and academics are integrated into a student's schedule throughout the day. Our schedule is hugely successful because we overcome the unique challenge of attracting students for the arts, while ensuring they have access to rigorous academic courses at their level. Every year we work to eliminate scheduling conflicts between academic courses and arts classes and to maximize classroom instructional time.

- ii. Student Recruitment and Enrollment - the only change from the original charter is that our student recruitment reaches much further than a 40 mile radius. Students attend school from 75 towns in Maine this year and we transport throughout a 65-70 mile radius. As outlined in the charter application, our school maintains a website and facebook page. We continue to utilize our partnerships with community groups, businesses, colleges, and arts organizations to assist in outreach to families and students. As hoped, we have successfully produced communication brochures for distribution.
  - iii. Staffing and Human Resources - no changes
  - iv. Management and Operation - no changes
  - v. Parent and Community Development - no changes
- c. Governance Plan
- i. Governing Body - no changes except when Maine Arts Academy was formed as a Maine nonprofit corporation for the explicit purpose of governing the charter school. When filing the original application, Maine Arts Academy filed its 1023 application with the Internal Revenue Service. While awaiting determination, Maine Arts Academy had a fiscal sponsorship agreement with New England Music Camp Association, a 501 (c) (3) organization, for the purpose of accepting charitable donations to provide start up funds for the corporation. A fiscal sponsorship agreement was executed at the Board of Directors initial meeting during September 2015. By June of 2019 the fiscal sponsorship agreement was ended. The present governing body for Maine Arts Academy is its Board of Directors.
  - ii. Governing Board Composition - no changes
- d. Business and Financial Services
- i. Budget - no changes
  - ii. Financial Management - no changes
  - iii. Facilities - The only change from the original charter is the facilities have expanded to provide year round programming for several organizations that share the campus with the school. A new building was completed in

2019 that has provided 6 new classroom spaces along with office space for the special education department. Another new building is scheduled to be completed in 2022 that will provide a science lab and larger arts studio space.

- iv. Transportation - no changes
  - v. Insurance - no changes
  - vi. Food Service - no changes
- e. Education Service Providers - The first year the school was opened, K-12 service providers were contracted to provide an online curriculum for students. After the first year, this curriculum was no longer used. There are no new changes in education service providers for the future.

### **VIII. Addressing Special Issues**

This section provides the opportunity to address special issues that the school foresees may have a dramatic impact on the school's educational programs, governance, facilities, services, or budget and to address concerns raised in the Maine Charter School Commission's Performance Report for Renewal.

The school has no special issues to address at this time.

### Appendix A: Governing Board Turnover

School Year	Total Membership	Members Joining	Members Departing
2016-2017	8	3	4
2017-2018	14	14	6
2018-2019	13	6	5
2019-2020	8	1	1



**Appendix B: Staff Turnover**

	<b>SY 2016-2107</b>	<b>SY 2017-2018</b>	<b>SY 2018-2019</b>	<b>SY 2019-2020</b>
<b>Administrators</b>				
Number and (FTEs)	1 (1 FTE)	0	0	4 (2.9 FTEs)
Departures during school year	1 (1 FTE)	0	0	3 (2.5 FTEs)
Departures at end of school year	0	0	0	1 (.4 FTE)
<b>Teachers</b>				
Number and (FTEs)	7 (4.4 FTEs)	5 (3.6 FTEs)	3 (2.5 FTEs)	4 (3.3 FTEs)
Departures during school year	0	2 (1.3 FTEs)	3 (2.5 FTEs)	1 (1 FTE)
Departures at end of school year	7 (4.4 FTEs)	3 (2.3 FTEs)	0	3 (2.3 FTEs)
<b>Other Staff</b>				
Number and (FTEs)	2 (1.5 FTEs)	2 (2 FTEs)	0	3 (2.5 FTEs)
Departures during school year	1 (.5 FTE)	2 (2 FTEs)	0	2 (1.5 FTEs)
Departures at end of school year	1 (1 FTE)	0	0	1 (1 FTE)

Explanation of Staff Turnover:

Maine Arts Academy has consistently had a pool of qualified applicants respond to any job posting. Eight staff members have been on board since our first year of operation. When given employment offers, faculty members have a return rate of 100%. Faculty members are encouraged to engage in professional development opportunities and to collaborate with teachers from other institutions. When the budget allows, teachers are reimbursed for completed coursework in their area of expertise. Consistent with the original application, new staff members are promoted from within whenever possible or are recruited from existing partner organizations, via local and statewide newspapers, sites like JobsinMaine.com and ServingSchools.com, and on social media platforms. MeAA remains an equal opportunity

employer and does not discriminate on the basis of racial heritage, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or physical characteristics. Staff members are expected to meet certain standards of job performance and good conduct and must meet the criteria outlined in the Staff and Employee Handbook. Consistent with year one, when performance or conduct does not meet school standards, MeAA will endeavor, when it deems appropriate, to provide the employee a reasonable opportunity to correct the deficiency. If, however, the employee fails to make the correction, he or she will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Unfortunately during the 19-20 school year, challenges arose with administration and the finance office which influenced a small amount of staff to leave. With new, highly qualified hires working alongside veteran core faculty members, we continue to maintain a work environment that values the unique abilities of all staff members. MeAA works to provide competitive salaries and benefits. Holiday parties, end of the year celebrations, and team building activities like “Paint Night” help to keep morale at its highest.

### Appendix C: Student Turnover

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of Students	126	163	212	199
Departures during school year	35	24	25	9
Departures at end of school year	14	8	14	7

Explanation of Student Turnover:

The count for departures at the end of the school year for 2018 and 2019 include:

- Exchange students who were leaving the country and did not have a choice to return for another school year.
- Students who chose to leave the school as a result of assigned individualized behavior plans.

### Appendix D: Projected Budget

Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$457,317.10	\$451,158.76	\$482,139.61	\$496,514.02
Internal balances				
Intergovernmental Receivables	\$21,972.00	\$22,410.00	\$22,860.00	\$23,316.00
Inventories				
Depreciable capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$590,479.62</b>	<b>\$584,759.28</b>	<b>\$616,190.13</b>	<b>\$631,020.54</b>
Deferred Outflows of Resources				

Liabilities				
Accounts Payable	\$54,862.00	\$30,580.00	\$30,580.00	\$30,580.00
Accrued Summer Salaries	\$82,729.00	\$82,729.00	\$82,729.00	\$82,729.00
Accrued vacation				
Accrued interest				
Unearned Revenue				
Long-term liabilities				
Portion due or payable within one year:				
Capital lease obligations				
Bonds payable				
Portion due or payable after one year				
Compensated absences				
Capital lease obligations				
Bonds payable				
Net pension liability	\$14,000.00	\$14,671.00	\$15,097.00	\$15,525.00
Total liabilities	\$151,591.00	\$127,980.00	\$128,406.00	\$128,834.00
Deferred Inflows of Resources				
Net Position				
Net investment in capital assets	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52	\$111,190.52
Restricted				
Special revenue funds				
Capital project funds				
Unrestricted	\$327,698.10	\$345,588.76	\$376,593.61	\$390,996.02
Total Net Positions	\$438,888.62	\$456,779.28	\$487,784.13	\$502,186.54

	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024
Cash Flows from non-capital financing activities				
State Funds	\$2,187,015.00	\$2,277,328.00	\$2,375,993.03	\$2,401,540.00
Federal Funds	\$413,671.35	\$230,963.00	\$179,556.42	\$185,134.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00	\$14,000.00	\$14,500.00
Transfers from other organizations				
Increase (decrease) in due to other funds				
Net cash flows from non-capital financing	\$2,614,186	\$2,521,791.00	\$2,569,549.	\$2,601,174

activities	.35		45	.00
Cash Flows from operating activities				
Reciepts from operating activities				
Reciepts from Miscellaneous Revenues				
Payments to suppliers	\$1,188,763 .25	\$991,621.00	\$965,749.0 0	\$987,743.5 2
Payments to employees	\$1,427,809 .00	\$1,467,161.00	\$1,509,724. 00	\$1,552,534 .00
Net cash flows from operating activities	-\$2,616,57 2.25	-\$2,458,782.00	-\$2,475,473 .00	-\$2,540,27 7.52
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	-\$2,385.90	\$63,009.00	\$94,076.45	\$60,896.48
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		-\$2,385.90	\$60,623.10	\$154,699.5 5
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	-\$2,385.90	\$60,623.10	\$154,699.5 5	\$215,596.0 3

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/145eoL5Y68g2oClchYTSL62HX4138RdCvZeK06zXD1wk/edit?ts=5f4fef82#gid=978639166>