



**Maine Academy of Natural Sciences**

**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

On August 30th an announced on-site visit was made to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences. The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) Review Team, MCSC liaison, and Maine Department of Education Special Services team member held interviews with school leadership, and the school’s Governing Board. They also reviewed data provided by the school. 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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| School Liaison | John Bird |
| MCSC Executive Director | Bob Kautz |
| MCSC Director of Program Management | Gina Post |
| Consultant | Joe Drago, CPA |
| Consultant  | Dr. Joe Mattos |
| MDOE Special Services | Dr. Roberta Lucas |

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| School’s Mission | MeANS offers the public a student centered, staff guided high school whose purpose is to inspire and engage students. We welcome a diverse range of students including those whose previous learning environment has not inspired them to fulfill their potential as learners, those who have become profoundly disconnected from their education as well as those who have a passion for the school’s themes of agriculture, forestry and sustainability. |
| School’s Vision | To encourage students to re-engage with their education. They will grow as critical thinkers and problem solvers by developing habits of heart and mind that lead them to take responsibility for their own actions, as well as for the welfare of their community. |

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| School Information |

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| School Name | Maine Academy of Natural Sciences |
| Address | 16 Prescott Drive, P.O. Box 159, Hinckley, ME 04944 |

Governing Board

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| Chair | Cheryl Bulmer |
| Vice Chair | Stephanie Johnson |
| Finance Chair | David Cyr |
| Board Member | Tom Edwards |
| Board Member | Dana Doran |
| Board Member | Senator Scott Cyrway |
| Board Member | Sally Beaulieu |
| Board Member | Scott Byrd |
| Board Member | Kimberly Patnode |
| Board Member | Troy Frost |
| Board Member | Cheryl Mercier |

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| Head of School | Matthew Newberg |
| Dean of Students | Dani Best |
| Dean of Students | Becky Dennison |
| Special Education Director | Christine Sullivan |

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| Year Opened | 2012 |
| Years in Operation | 8 |
| Number of Sending Districts | 34 |
| Grades Served | 9 - 12 |
| Current Enrollment | 196\* |
| Students on Waiting List | 8\* |

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

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| Section 1: Indicator Summary Table |
| **Indicator** | **Exceeds** | **Meets**  | **Partially Meets** | **Does Not Meet** | **Other** |
| **Student Academic Proficiency** |
| Target 1 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Target 2 |  |  |  |  | Not reportable |
| Target 3 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Target 4 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Student Academic Growth** |
| Target 1 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Target 2 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Achievement Gaps** |
| Target 1 |  |  |  | **X[[1]](#footnote-2)** |  |
| Target 2 |  |  |  | **X2** |  |
| Target 3 |  |  |  | **X3** |  |
| Target 4 |  |  |  | **X4** |  |
| **Student Attendance** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Student Enrollment**  |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Post-Secondary Readiness** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 4 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Financial Performance and Stability** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Governance Board Performance and Stewardship** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Facilities** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Transportation** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **Food** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **School Climate** |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Target 3 |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Target 4 |  |  |  | **X** | Gallup not conducted |
| **Parent & Community Engagement**  |
| Target 1 |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 |  | **X** |  |  |  |

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| Section 2: Demographics |

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| Section 3: Academic Proficiency |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Percent at or above expectations on SAT – Reading  | Increasing percent of students scoring at or above state proficiency level by 3% annually starting in 2016 | 29% of students were at or above state expectation on the reading portion of the SAT.* 2016 = 33.3%
* 2017 = 23.5%
* 2018 = 29.5%
 | Did not meet |
| Percent at or above expectations on SAT - Math  | Increasing percent of students scoring at or above state proficiency level by 3% annually starting in 2016 | 16% of students were at or above state expectation on the math portion of the SAT.* 2016 = not reportable
* 2017 = not reportable
* 2018 = not reportable
 | Results are not publicly reportable due to small ‘n’ size and maintaining student confidentiality.  |
| Reading NWEA | Fewer than 10% of seniors will score in the low-grade level norm in literacy | 27% of seniors were in the low grade level norm in literacy | Did not meet |
| Math NWEA | Fewer than 10% of seniors will score in the low-grade level norm in math | 18% of seniors were in the low grade level norm in math | Did not meet |

**Discussion**

The school’s 2.5% increase in meeting state expectations did not meet the 3% growth target for SAT reading. SAT math results are not publicly reportable due to small ‘n’ size and maintaining student confidentiality.

The school reported that test anxiety continues to make testing difficult for many of its students. The school did not provide NWEA data.

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| Section 4: Academic Growth |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Reading NWEA – Percent not meeting reading growth target | The 12th grade will have fewer than 34% who did not meet their projected RIT growth score in reading  | 40% of seniors did not meet projected RIT growth. | Did not meet |
| Math NWEA – Percent not meeting reading growth target  | The 12th grade will have fewer than 28% who did not meet their projected RIT growth score in math  | 45% of seniors did not meet projected RIT growth. | Did not meet |

**Discussion**

The school did not meet its academic growth indicator targets.

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| Section 5: Achievement Gaps |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Percent Well Below on SAT Reading | Reducing the number of students with an IEP who score well below by 2% annually beginning with 2015-16 year as baseline.2018-19 target = 32% or lower | Not provided | Did not meet |
| Percent Well Below on SAT Math | Reducing the number of students with an IEP who score well below by 2% annually beginning with 2015-16 year as baseline. 2018-19 target = 25% or lower | Not provided | Did not meet |
| Percent Not Meeting Growth Target on Reading NWEA in unidentified and identified groups  | Reducing the number of students with an IEP not meeting growth target by 2% annually in relation to unidentified group beginning with the 2015-16 year as baseline.2018-19 target = 10% | Not provided | Did not meet |
| Percent Well Below Growth Target on Math NWEA | Reducing the number of students with an IEP scoring well below by 2% annually beginning with 2015-16 year as baseline.2018-19 target = 8% | Not provided | Did not meet |

**Discussion**

The school did not provide data addressing achievement gap indicator targets. During a turnover in administration, the school did not collect the data required to report on achievement gaps.

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| Section 6: Attendance  |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Average daily attendance | ADA will be 85% or higher  | 90% average daily attendance  | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its attendance target with 90% average daily attendance.

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| Section 7: Enrollment |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Student re-enrollment from one year to next | Student re-enrollment from one year to next will be 90% | 93% re-enrollment | Met |
| Students enrolled continuously for multiple years | Continuous re-enrollment percentage of students for more than two years will be 85% | 89%  | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its re-enrollment and continuous enrollment targets.

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| Section 8: Post-Secondary Readiness |

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| Measure | Target | Results |  |
| Percentage of students who have graduation in the current year as their Personal Learning Plan Goal | 90% of students who have graduation as their Personal Learning Plan Goal in the current year will graduate in that calendar year | 93% | Met |
| Percentage of students who take and complete concurrent and dual enrollment classes at KVCC or other Community Colleges who achieve passing grades | 90% of students who take and complete concurrent and dual enrollment classes at KVCC or other Community Colleges will achieve passing grades | 92% of students who took a college course received passing grades. | Met |
| Percentage of most recent graduates contacted who are not in college or parenting and are working full time or enlisted during the year following graduation  | 70% of most recent graduates contacted who are not in college or parenting and are working full time or enlisted during the year following graduation | 96% | Met |
| Percentage of graduating seniors who will have been accepted into a post-secondary institution within a year of graduation  | 45% of graduating seniors will be accepted into a post-secondary institution  | 39% were accepted into post secondary institutions. | Did not meet |

**Discussion**

The school met targets for three of the four indicator targets. The school met the targets for PLP graduation plans, dual and concurrent enrollment classes, and and post-graduation employment. The school did not meet the target for acceptance at post-secondary education institutions.

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| Section 9: Finances |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Budget versus actual revenue and expenditures | Annual budget balance | Balanced budget provided | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its financial indicator target by submitting a balanced budget.

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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 operations | Meets legal requirements | The board met regularly and posted meeting agendas and minutes as required. | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its target for governance by meeting monthly and posting both agendas and minutes.

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| Section 11: Facilities  |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Facility meets state standards | Facility will meet all applicable state standards for public schools  | Facility met standards | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its target for facilities by meeting facilities standards for public schools.

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| Section 12: Transportation |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Record of costs and student utilization | Transportation is safe and efficient | Transportation was safe and efficient | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its target for safe and efficient transportation. The school combined bussing routes with other schools to have more efficient routes.

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| Section 13: Food Service |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Record of costs and student utilization | Food service meets applicable requirements | Food service met requirements | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met its target for food service.

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| Section 14: School Climate |

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| Measure | Target | Results |  |
| Instances of bullying, harassment, or other abusive behavior | Schools will submit 5 or fewer incidents of bullying or harassment reported to the Department of Education | Zero instances of bullying and harassment. | Met |
| Confidential survey of parents, staff and students | Percent expressing a positive view of school climate90% of students85% of parents90% of staff | Students 46%Parents 70%Staff 71% | Did not meet |
| Participation on Confidential survey of parents, staff and students | Students 25%Parents 20%Staff 60% | Teachers & staff 78%Students 47%Percentage of parent responses not reported | Partially met |
| Gallup Poll Survey of Students Growth Between First and Final Years | Each grade cohort at MeANS will show growth in one of three areas (Hope, Engagement, Well Being) measured by Gallup Poll annually using 2017 fall results as baseline | The school did not conduct the Gallup Poll in 2018-19. | Did not meet |

**Discussion**

In the area of school climate, the school met the target for instances of bullying. It partially met the target for participation in surveys. It did not meet the target for percentage of positive responses on the school climate survey. The school did not administer the Gallup Poll in 2018-19.

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| Section 15: Parent Engagement |

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| **Measure** | **Target** | **Results** |  |
| Weekly communications between advisor and family | 95% of parents receive written or oral communication from the advisor each week | 100% | Met |
| Percent of parent/guardian participation in student-led conferences | 90% of parents attend at least one student led conference during the year | 94% | Met |

**Discussion**

The school met both of its parent engagement targets; weekly communication and parent participation in student conferences.

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| Section 16: Mission and Vision Implementation Evidence and Results |

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

MEANS provides Project-based learning which the school reports continues to be a strength with increases in the number and scope of intensives offered on the themes of the school. The school reported on particular highlight of the 2018-19 school year was the completion of a sugar house and the production of hundreds of gallons of commercial grade maple syrup.

Additionally, the school successfully completed its fifth year of the 21st Century grant engaging students in after school activities.

MEANS continued to grow the Threshold program (doubling its enrollment) through the implementation of a CSP grant.

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| Section 17: Site Visit Report |

**Maine Charter School Commission**

**Monitoring Site Visit Report October 31, 2019**

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| REPORT DATE | October 31, 2019 |
| SCHOOL NAME: | Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MEANS) |
| ADDRESS: | 13 Easler Road, Hinckley, Maine 04944 |
| GRADES SERVED: | Grades 9 - 12 |
| ENROLLMENT: | 197 (school year 2018-19) |
| YEAR OPENED: | 2013 |

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 governance, fiscal operations and results, 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 or financial reporting 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 August 30, 2019 monitoring site visit:

* Bob Kautz, Executive Director
* Gina Post, Director of Program Management
* Joe Drago, Consultant
* John Bird, Charter School Commission Liaison
* Roberta Lucas, MDOE
* Leora Byras, MDOE
* Joe Mattos, Consultant

The monitoring site visit was conducted on August 30, 2019, at Maine Academy of Natural Sciences. Team members used the Site Visit Manual to plan for and conduct the visit. 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 and Finance Committee 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
* Prior year audit and management letter, 4Q19 financials and FY20 board approved budget
* ESP contract
* Student unenrollment data

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
	+ Cheryl Bulmer, Chair
	+ Stephanie Johnson, Vice Chair
	+ David Cyr, Finance Chair
	+ Tom Edwards
* Head of School
	+ Matthew Newberg
* Leadership Team
	+ Danni Best – Dean of Students
	+ Rebecca Dennison – Dean Dean of Students for Threshold Program
	+ Christine Sullivan - Special Education Director
	+ Emanuel Pariser – Consultant

Monitoring Site Visit Findings

1. Mission Alignment
* The Governing Board and Leadership Team identify MEANS’ mission as to serve the needs of at-risk students by helping them gain knowledge, skills, and personal qualities through hands-on and real-life agricultural and environmental learning projects and activities.
* Enacting the mission with at-risk students who are not interested or engaged in agricultural or environmental projects and learning activities has proved to be a formidable challenge for MEANS staff.
1. Student Achievement
* MEANS is showing positive student performance trends in the areas of student attendance, student participation in dual enrollment courses, and graduation rate. Student performance on NWEA assessments show growth (75% of students) in at least one area (ELA or Math).
* Measuring at-risk students’ learning and progress in attaining academic knowledge and skills, as well as personal qualities (e.g. acquiring habits of heart and mind) have proved to be a challenge. The MEANS governing board approved the addition of a staff position for the collection and analysis of data on students’ academic and social performance measures.
* Results on state required MEA assessments show MEANS students, overall, performing below state standards.
* Because of Threshold’s remote instruction, the school continues to address the way students in the Threshold program receive special education services in the least restrictive environment, as well as insuring that educational programming for Threshold students includes a sufficient amount of agricultural or environmental learning activities.
1. School Climate and Family Engagement
* This review cycle of MEANS site visit did not include meeting with focus groups of students or parents. However, the Panorama Survey conducted at the end of the 18/19 school year did provide some interesting perceptions of School Climate and Family Engagement.
* An area in the Panorama Survey which should to be reviewed and addressed by staff and school leadership was School Engagement (e.g. excitement about classes, eager to participate, and interest in classes) which shows relatively low favorable responses by students, though the results were at approximately the 50th percentile nationally when compared to like schools (rural high schools with moderate free/reduced lunch population).
* All respondent groups (family, student, teacher/staff) reported high percent of positive responses in the area of relationships with all three groups around the 99th percentile nationally when compared to like schools.
1. Governance
* The Governing Board is comprised of knowledgeable and experienced individuals with expertise in finance, business operations, agriculture, and educational programming.
* The Board is committed to providing support for the new Head of School. A comprehensive evaluation system will be used to provide the Head of School with on-going feedback regarding how the Head of School is performing his responsibilities.
* For the upcoming 19/20 school year, the Board will be collecting information through thoughtful conversations with all stakeholders in order to create goals and a plan for improving the effective and efficient operation of MEANS which will support the learning of students and staff. Areas of focus will include: 1. clarifying fiscal, staffing and programming relationships between MEANS and Goodwill Hinckley; 2. using data (NWEA, Panorama Survey, internal measures of student performance, etc.) to better understand how MEANS students are performing in meeting MEANS mission and goals; 3. investigating options (grants, development and fund raising, etc.) for ensuring the future financial stability of MEANS.
1. School Leadership
* The new Head of School (Matthew Newberg) has a firm understanding regarding student learning and operational trends that exist at MEANS. He plans to work collaboratively with students, staff, the Leadership Team and Board to improve work and learning conditions, and relationships at MEANS.
* The “teacher-powered schools” model was explored by the previous Head of School and may be explored by the new Head of School along with other distributive leadership models.
1. Finance
* The Board, through the Finance Committee, is actively engaged in overseeing the financial results and planning. The new Executive Director is beginning to be more involved with financial and administrative processes.
* The Board may consider addressing the timing of receipt of the Audited Financial Statements and Management Report as an earlier date would better inform the MEANS’ fiscal operations and reporting.
* While receiving financial reports on a quarterly basis is per the ESP contract, increasing the frequency may help to ensure that the MEANS staff is up to date and directing resources towards the needs of the educational mission.

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| Section 18: Commendations and Considerations |

**Commendations**

* The MEANS governing board has diverse skill sets and active subcommittees.
* With the a new Head of School at the beginning of school year 2019-2020, the school identified some gaps in curriculum and instruction and is now working to develop systems that ensure strong a curriculum in all subject areas.

**Considerations**

* The school’s academic achievement in both ELA and math continue to be low.
* The school may benefit from reviewing its overall enrollment and enrollment by program (on campus and Threshold) to determine what enrollment structure is in the best interest of the school and student outcomes.
* In order for the school to meet its charter contract obligations, it should consider developing a plan for ongoing contract review and a format for collecting all the required data for annual reporting.
1. -4 School unable to provide data [↑](#footnote-ref-2)