

Maine Charter School Commission

September, 2016

On May 25 and July 12, 2016, announced on-site visits were made to Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) public charter school. The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) review team of 2 members was accompanied by the MCSC Executive Director, MCSC Director of Program Management, and Department of Education Special Services team member. The visiting team held interviews with school leadership, staff, students, parents, community partners, 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.

Commission Member, Review Team Chair	Mike Wilhelm
Commission	Laurie Pendleton
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post
DOE Special Services team member	Roberta Lucas

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.

Maine Charter School Commission

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

September 2016

Section 1: School Overview

School Name	Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA)
Address	Ballard Center, Suite 230, 6 Chestnut Street Augusta, Maine 04330

Board Chair	Amy Carlisle
Head of School	Dr. Melinda Browne

Year Opened	School year 2015-2016
Years in Operation	1
Number of Sending Districts	102
Grades Served	7-12
Number of Students	281 (October 1 count, 2015)
Student - teacher Ratio	22:1

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.
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.

Section 2: Indicator Summary Table

Indicator	Meets Contract agreement	Partially meets	Does not meet
Student Academic Proficiency		X ¹	
Student Academic Growth		X ²	
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups		X ³	
Student Attendance			X ⁴
Recurrent Enrollment from Year to Year	X		
Post-Secondary Readiness		X ⁵	
Financial Performance and Sustainability	X		
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	X		
Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program	X		
Transportation	X		
School Social and Academic Climate		X ⁶	
Parent and Community Engagement		X ⁷	

¹ MEVA did not collect data on the percent of course enrollments in which students are meeting standards disaggregated by grade and course.

² As measured by the NWEA, 49% of students met the growth target in reading and 24% of students met the target in math. MeVA did not meet the target of 80% of students meeting growth in either subject area. MeVA did not collect data on the percent of students who had an ILP written within 9 weeks of their enrollment date. MeVA did not meet the target for 100 percent of students having an ILP written within 9 weeks of their enrollment date. MeVA did not include individual benchmark marks in students' ILPs. MeVA did not meet the target for 80 percent of students meeting the benchmarks established on their ILPs.

³ MeVA did not include individual growth targets in students' ILPs for the 2015-16 school year and did not meet the target of establishing a baseline for the percent of students in subgroups meeting their Individual Growth Targets outlined in their ILPs.

⁴ The average attendance rate for MeVA students in grades 7-8 was 91%. The average attendance rate for MeVA students in grades 9-12 was 84%. The school average was 85.6%. The state average for grades k-8 was 95% and 93% for 9-12. The combined state average was 94%. MeVA did not meet the target of being at or above the state averages for attendance.

⁵ MeVA did not collect data on the percent of students accepted to post-secondary schools. The school did not meet the target of establishing a baseline.

⁶ MeVA did not collect data on student participation in school sponsored or outside activities, and did not meet the target of establishing a baseline of the percent of students who participated in at least one school sponsored or outside activity.

⁷ MEVA did not have a School Improvement Team or Parent Advisory Committee during the 2015-16 school year, and did not meet the target of collecting a baseline of the number of parents participation. Data for the percent of families who attended ILP meetings was not collected during the 2015-16 school year. Data for the percent of Learning Coaches who logged into the Online School at least once per week was not collected during the 2015-16 school year.

Section 3: Academics

Targets:

Student Academic Proficiency:

State Assessments

- Percent of grade 7 students scoring proficient on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 8 students scoring proficient on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 11 students scoring proficient on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 7 students scoring proficient on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 8 students scoring proficient on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 11 students scoring proficient on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 8 students scoring proficient on the Science portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.
- Percent of grade 11 students scoring proficient on the Science portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state average.

School Selected Assessments

- Year 1: Establish baseline using NWEA Reading Assessment for each grade level 7-12.
- Year 1: Establish baseline using NWEA Math Assessment for each grade level 7-12.
- Year 1: Establish baseline for the percent of course enrollments in which students meet the standards for that course. Meeting standard will be defined as mastering 80% or more of the course objectives and will be reported using the OLS system.

Student Academic Growth:

State Assessments

- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of same cohort students who reach proficiency from 7th grade to 8th grade in ELA.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of same cohort students who reach proficiency from 7th grade to 8th grade in math
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of successive cohort of students who reach proficiency on the state reading assessment from one year to the next for each grade level tested.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of successive cohort of students who reach proficiency on the state math assessment from one year to the next for each grade level tested.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of successive cohort of students who reach proficiency on the state science assessment from one year to the next for each grade level tested.

School Selected Assessments

- Percent of students who meet their individual growth targets with the fall administration of the Reading NWEA establishing the baseline and the spring administration establishing the end point on a yearly basis. Yearly Target: 80% of students will meet their individual growth targets in reading
- Percent of students who meet their individual growth targets with the fall administration of the Math NWEA establishing the baseline and the spring administration establishing the end point on a yearly basis. Yearly Target: 80% of students will meet their individual growth targets in Math
- 100% of students will have an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) within 9 weeks of enrollment.
- 80% of students will meet the benchmarks established on their ILP's.

Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups:

- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students in identified subgroups reaching proficiency as measured by the state assessment in grades 7, 8, and 11 in reading.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students in identified subgroups reaching proficiency as measured by the state assessment in grades 7, 8, and 11 in math.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students in identified subgroups meeting their individual goals as measured on the NWEA in grades 7-12 in reading.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students in identified subgroups meeting their individual goals as measured on the NWEA in grades 7-12 in math.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students in identified subgroups meeting their Individual Growth Targets on their ILP's

Performance:

State test results for 2016 are not yet available.

Student Academic Proficiency:

According to MeVA's Performance Measures, it will measure student academic proficiency using the State Testing and using NWEA, as well as evaluating the percent of course enrollments in which students meet the standards for that course. Meeting standard will be defined as mastering 80% or more of the course objectives and will be reported using the Online System.

At this time, State Testing results are not available. Data for the percent of course enrollments in which students are meeting standards disaggregated by grade and course was not collected during the 2015-16 school year. The school did report NWEA scores for establishing a baseline in this area. Scores are reported below.

Percent of students in each grade 7-12 scoring in the average to above average RIT band in reading on the NWEA. (Based on Spring 16 scores.)	
7 th grade	92%
8 th grade	80%
9 th grade	71%
10 th grade	90%
11 th grade	86%
12 th grade	not tested

Percent of students in each grade 7-12 scoring in the average to above average RIT band in math on the NWEA. (Based on Spring 16 scores.)	
7 th grade	50%
8 th grade	60%
9 th grade	52%
10 th grade	83%
11 th grade	64%
12 th grade	not tested

MeVA's NEWA testing shows that its students appear to be stronger in the area of reading than they are in math. The grade level average for percent of students scoring in the average to above average RIT band in reading was 83.8%, compared to 61.8% for math.

MeVA's completion rate for the spring NWEA administration was 60%. 130 students completed both the math and reading sections.

MEVA is conducting a review of its testing protocols. MeVA plans to add more test sites to accommodate the school's state-wide catchment area. MEVA plans to hire part-time proctors to work in conjunction with the teachers. MeVA plans to establish the testing schedule and notify parents as early as possible for the 2016-17 school year.

In August, 2016 MEVA requested approval from the MCSC to conduct its NWEA assessments via online methods using virtual proctors. MeVA virtually-administered the winter 2016 NWEA tests and gave the MCSC review team a demonstration of the virtual proctoring. The MCSC granted permission to MeVA for virtual proctoring of the NWEA. MEVA believes that students' participation will increase if students do not have to travel to test sites.

Student Academic Growth:

According to MeVA's Performance Measures, it will measure student academic growth using the State Testing and using NWEA, as well as student ILPs.

At this time, State Testing results are not available. MEVA students took the Fall NWEA to set their baseline for the school year. The NWEA program projects each student's growth between fall and spring. Students complete the Spring NWEA as a summative assessment for the school year. The NWEA program calculates its growth scores based on the difference between each student's projected growth and his/her actual growth. 30% of MeVA's students took both the fall and spring tests, providing only a sample of data. A summary of MEVA's school-wide results is below:

Grade	Percent of students meeting projected growth - READING	Percent of students meeting projected growth - MATH
7	29%	29%
8	60%	0%
9	57%	10%
10	50%	45%
11	NWEA projection not provided for grade 11	

In reading, students achieved high percentile scores on the Fall-2015 test. Their growth scores from Fall-2015 to Spring-2016 were modest, averaging, across 4 grade levels, 49%.

In math, it appears that MeVA's students, as a group, are not as strong in math as they are in reading. Their growth scores from Fall-2015 to Spring-2016 averaged, across 4 grade levels, 21%.

49% of students met the growth target in reading and 24% of students met the target in math. MeVA did not meet the target of 80% of students meeting growth as measured by the NWEA in either subject area. MeVA has identified math as an area of need and plans to use two new programs with hopes that these tools will result in significant improvements.

MeVA did not collect data on the percent of students who had an ILP written within 9 weeks of their enrollment date. MeVA did not meet the target for 100 percent of students having an ILP written within 9 weeks of their enrollment date.

MeVA did not include individual benchmarks in students' ILPs. MeVA did not meet the target for 80 percent of students meeting the benchmarks established on their ILPs.

Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups:

According to MeVA's Performance Measures, it will measure Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups using the State Assessment, NWEA, and student ILPs.

MeVA met the targets of setting benchmarks using NWEA data for subgroups including special education students, students with a 504 plan, black or African American, and American Indian or Alaskan Native. Due to small sample size data are not reportable for maintaining student confidentiality; however, data were submitted to the Commission and the review team will consider all available information.

MeVA did not include individual growth targets in students' ILPs for the 2015-16 school year and did not meet the target of establishing a baseline for the percent of students in subgroups meeting their Individual Growth Targets outlined in their ILP's.

41 students took the SAT, for a completion of 66%. MeVA's average score for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing was 500. MeVA's average score for Math was 439. State and National averages are not yet available for comparison.

Section 4: Enrollment & Attendance

Targets:

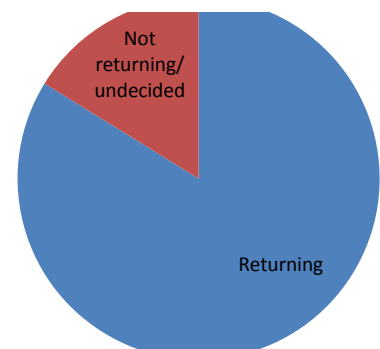
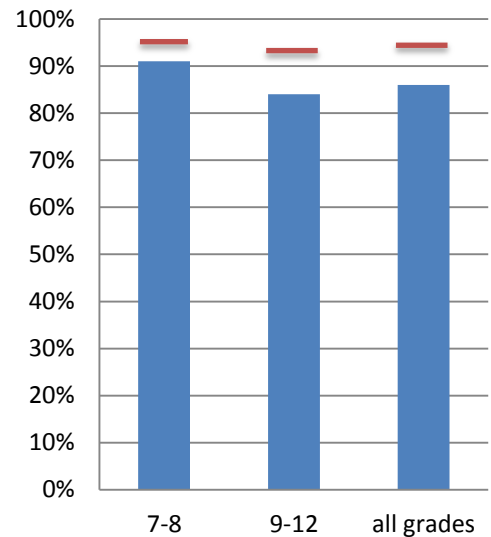
- The Average attendance rate as reported in the MEDMS data system for MEVA will be at or above the state average.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students enrolled on state "count day" who are still enrolled on last day of school.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students enrolled on last day of school indicating intent to return the following school year.

Performance:

The average attendance rate for MeVA students in grades 7-8 was 91%. The average attendance rate for MeVA students in grades 9-12 was 84%. The school average was 85.6%. The state average for grades k-8 was 95% and 93% for 9-12. The combined state average was 94%. MeVA did not meet the target of being at or above the state averages for attendance.

MeVA reported that during the coming school year, the school's Advisor will be managing the Attendance Policy, which requires multiple steps, including phone calls at the three-day absence mark and registered letters from the Head of School at the ten-day absence mark.

Average Daily Attendance



The percent of students enrolled on state “count day” who were still enrolled on last day of school was 66% . MeVA met the target of establishing a baseline for the percent of students enrolled on state “count day” who are still enrolled on last day of school.

The percent of students enrolled on last day of school who indicated intent to return the following school year was 83%. MeVA met the target of establishing a baseline for the percent of student re-enrollment.

Post-Secondary Readiness:

Targets:

- Year 1: Establish baseline. Target based on the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate⁸.
- Year 1: Establish baseline. Percent of students accepted to post-secondary schools.

MeVA is gathering graduation data. In its first year it did not have a 4 year AGCR.

MeVA did not collect data on the percent of students accepted to post-secondary schools. The school did not meet the target of establishing a baseline. MEVA plans to follow up with its first graduating class at intervals during the coming year. MEVA hired a new Advisor for the 2016-17 school year. This individual will be responsible for facilitating the post-secondary planning process.

Section 5: Governance

Targets

- Board will meet one time per month at a minimum.
- Evidence of required bylaws and policies are in place and are regularly reviewed as indicated in minutes.
- 100% of Governing Board agendas and minutes are made available to the public.
- Bylaws and policies in application regularly reviewed.

Chair of the Board	Amy Carlisle
Board Member	Peter Mills
Board Member	Ed LeBlanc
Board Member	Kevin Pomerleau
Board Member	Donna Madore

The MeVA Governing Board is composed of five members of diverse skills and experiences. Three of the five governing board members have been active for all four years that the school has been under consideration. The board is actively recruiting new members.

The Governing Board meets monthly. All board meetings are posted on the school’s website and are open to the public. The

Board regularly reviews its policies. Agendas are posted and minutes kept and, after approval, are shared on the school’s website. It was noted by the review team that the school’s website and meeting materials weren’t current as of the end of the school year.

⁸ The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. For any given cohort, students who are entering grade 9 for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently “adjusted” by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrates to another country, or dies during that same period.

Section 6: Administration

During the 2015-16 school year MeVA had a mid-year transition in school leadership. A new Head of School started in February and immediately began working to familiarize herself with charter school laws and MeVA's charter contract.

Head of School	Dr. Melinda Browne
CFO	Jennifer Hight

Section 7: School Climate

Targets:

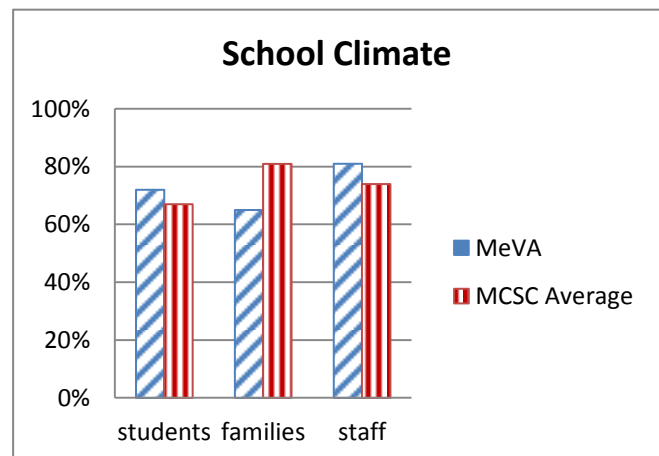
- School will report the number of behavioral incidents using the state and federal reporting requirements and in Year 1: will establish baseline.
- School will gather and respond to family, student, and staff perceptions of the quality of the school's social and academic climate. Percent of participation in state student climate surveys will be 85%.
- Year 1: will establish baseline of percent of students who participate in at least one school sponsored or outside activity.

Performance:

MeVA did not have any reportable behavior incidents during the 2015-16 school year. MeVA met the target of establishing a baseline in this area.

MeVA participated in the Panorama Surveys in spring 2016 and planned to use the survey results (April 2016) to identify areas for improvement. The Student, Family and Staff survey summaries for School Climate are to the right.

Based on the results of the surveys, MeVA created an Action Plan for seven different areas identified for improvement.



MeVA met the target of gathering and responding to family, student, and staff perceptions of the quality of the school's social and academic climate

MeVA offered Field trips throughout the state during the 2015-16 school year. The school did not collect data on student participation in school sponsored or outside activities. MeVA did not meet the target of establishing a baseline of the percent of students who participated in at least one school sponsored or outside activity.

Field Trips included:

- Ben and Jerry's (Freeport) Homeroom Meet-up
- Performance of Hamlet at The Strand (Rockland)
- Body Worlds Exhibit at Portland Science Center
- Meet the MEVA Staff Bowling Nights (Augusta and Bangor)
- Maine Charter School Day at State House Hall of Flags
- Ice Skating at Bank of Maine Ice Vault
- Sleeping Beauty Ballet (Bangor)
- MEVA Social Studies & Health Dept. Greet and Eats at Buffalo Wild Wings (Portland and Bangor)
- Maine State Museum (Augusta)
- Aladdin Ballet (Brewer)
- Tahn Tay – Spring Celebration (Portland)
- Mini Golf at Tabers (Auburn)
- Animal Shelter visit (Augusta)

Section 8: Parent and Community Engagement

Targets:

- 100% of staff, students, and families will utilize k-mail communication and documentation system.
- School Improvement Team and the Parent Advisory Committee meetings will have parent participation. In Year 1 a baseline of the number of parents participating will be collected.
- 100% of families will meet with teachers for Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's) at a minimum of once a year.
- 100% of Learning Coaches will log into the Online School (OLS) at a minimum of once a week.

Performance:

The k-mail communication and documentation system is utilized by 100% of the school community. MeVa met the target for 100% use of Kmail.

MEVA did not have a School Improvement Team or Parent Advisory Committee during the 2015-16 school year, but plans to implement a School Improvement Team and Parent Advisory Committee for the 2016-17 school year. MeVA did not meet the target of collecting a baseline of the number of parent participation.

Data for the percent of families who attended ILP meetings was not collected during the 2015-16 school year.

Data for the percent of Learning Coaches who logged into the Online School at least once per week was not collected during the 2015-16 school year.

Section 9: Finances

Targets:

- When monthly financials vary by more than 5%, the variance will be flagged for special governing board consideration to ensure a positive cash flow at the end of each school year.

Performance:

MEVA has implemented financial management practices with monthly reporting at governing board meetings. MeVA’s CFO has been involved to ensure charges from the ESP are accurate and reflective of the services being received. MeVA is making arrangements for a financial audit for FY 2015-16.

Section 10: Facilities & Maintenance and Transportation

Targets:

- Facility will meet all applicable state expectations for public schools
- School will provide record of costs and student utilization if applicable.

Performance:

Maine Virtual Academy’s office suite accommodates all teaching and collaborative activities. The office suite is fully utilized by the entire faculty. The owner of the property provides a weekly cleaning service. The school’s maintenance log-book is up to date. State Fire Marshall, Boiler and HVAC compliance inspections are current. MeVA met the target of having its facility meet all applicable state expectations for public schools.

MeVA did not have any costs for student transportation during the 2015-16 school year.

Section 11: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation

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.

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.

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.

Section 12: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

- MeVA faculty is committed to the success of the school and has worked collaboratively in the school's first year to learn the virtual environment and meet the challenges of the school's first year.
- The school administration, which saw turnover mid year, has shown considerable commitment to meeting the requirements of the school's success and the requirements of its charter.
- Students interviewed were very positive about their experience at the school and the faculty's interest in their success.
- The Board has taken a hands-on approach to guiding the school and assuming responsibility for its challenges and effectiveness.

Recommendations

- An effort should be made to increase "live session" student attendance.
- Greater Learning coach and family engagement should be encouraged through outreach and other means, and data kept of that engagement.
- Students reflected on the lack of personal relationships with other students. Opportunities for increased student attendance at activities outside of the virtual environment and other avenues for social contact should be explored.
- It is noteworthy that two components of the school's mission and vision - individual learning plans and post-secondary preparation- were not given the attention that their prominent articulation deserved. Student post-secondary data needs to be kept and the ILP expectations and results need to be recorded.
- The school should continue to work to increase student participation in school-wide assessments.
- Increased attention to special education enrollment and the provision of FAPE for students with disabilities.
- Address systemic truancy issue with particular attention to students with disabilities.