

# Annual Monitoring Report

## SY2024-25

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November 2025

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**Baxter Academy for Technology and Science**

***Board Chair: Ruth Dean***

***Executive Director: Anna Klein-Christie***



# NARRATIVE

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science, located in Portland, is in its thirteenth year of operation and serves 384 students from 59 cities and towns – from as far north as Boothbay, and as far south as York.

21.88% of Baxter students have an IEP - higher than the state average; while 20.05% of families are economically disadvantaged, lower than the statewide average.

High-level takeaways from SY2024-25:

*Strengths:*

- Reading, Math, and Science Proficiency
- Subgroup achievement
- College Readiness
- Graduation Rates (4, 5, and 6-Year Cohorts)
- A strong, active, and engaged governing board who meet regularly
- Student Persistence
- Flex Friday

*Areas of Focus:*

- Student Attendance
- Student School Culture and Climate
- Board Training

Student Achievement

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science administers the Maine Through Year Assessment to assess reading and math proficiency of students in Grade 10 and continues to exceed framework expectations - and outperform their statewide peers - in both subjects.

Subgroup performance remains extremely strong – with all groups exceeding framework expectations in reading and math - some outperforming state averages by nearly 30 percentage points.

The school uses both the Accuplacer and the SAT to measure college-readiness and 79% of students have met the college readiness indicators in both reading and math on the Accuplacer, and 88% on the SAT. Overall, most subgroups are meeting or exceeding framework expectations.



Chronic absenteeism continues to be an area where there's room for growth. Baxter reports that 27% of its students were chronically absent in SY2024-25, an increase from 20.74% a year ago. While Baxter enrolls students from Boothbay to York, the majority of their students reside in Cumberland County where the chronic absenteeism rate is approximately 19%.

Graduation rates remain strong. Baxter reports that 97% of seniors (4-year cohort) graduated in June, 99% of 5-year seniors, and 98% of 6-year seniors – consistently exceeding the state average and the annual goals defined by the Maine Department of Education.

82% of Baxter seniors successfully participated in at least one post-secondary activity, and the school supports students and families with completion of the FAFSA as needed.

#### School Climate and Family Engagement

The Maine Charter School Commission requires that schools administer the Panorama school climate surveys annually. For the first time this spring, Baxter students responded unfavorably to the survey questions. Family, teacher, and staff results remain strong. We encourage the Baxter governing board and administration to prioritize school climate and culture in the upcoming school year.

#### Organizational Sustainability

Baxter submits required documents to the Commission on time and accurately. The board is active - meeting regularly throughout the school year. Of the 21 board training requirements, only 13 were completed (62%) which does not meet performance framework expectations. This should be an area of focus for the board this upcoming school year.

The Commission requires the "timely posting of board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes". This is another area of the framework that the board should focus on, having not met framework expectations for several years in a row.

#### Financial Management and Viability

Based on FY25 4th quarter financials, Baxter Academy falls into the low to moderate risk on most financial criteria on the Performance Framework. Notably, the two-year cash flow metric has improved from a high risk result in FY24 to a low risk result this year. Only the three-year margin remains in the higher risk category mainly due to enrollment declines and the associated reduction in state subsidy in prior years. Baxter's board continues to monitor this closely and is poised to reduce this risk. Baxter engaged the services of Nicholson, Michaud & Nadeau, Certified Public Accountants and received a clean audit for FY24.

## School Mission and Student Persistence

Student persistence continues to be a strength of the school, consistently exceeding framework expectations.

# PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching	Not Meeting
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## Student Achievement

Proficiency	
Maine Through Year Assessment (ELA)	<b>Exceeding</b>  $\geq 5\%$ of state average of schools “at or above state expectations” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 10 - 67% of Baxter Academy high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 59% statewide per the Acacia platform</li> </ul>
Maine Through Year Assessment (Math)	<b>Exceeding</b>  $\geq 5\%$ of state average of schools “at or above state expectations” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 10 - 64% of Baxter Academy high school students are “at or above state expectations” compared to 49% statewide per the Acacia platform</li> </ul>
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (ELA)	<b>Exceeding</b>  $\geq 5\%$ of state average of schools “at or above state expectations” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with IEPs (Exceeding)</li> <li>Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)</li> </ul>
Maine Through Year Assessment – Subgroups (Math)	<b>Exceeding</b>  $\geq 5\%$ of state average of schools “at or above state expectations” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with IEPs (Exceeding)</li> <li>Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)</li> </ul>
Graduation	
4-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reported 97%</i>	<b>Exceeding</b>
5-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reported 99%</i>	<b>Exceeding</b>
6-Year High School Graduation Rate - <i>School reported 98%</i>	<b>Exceeding</b>

<b>Post-Secondary Readiness</b>	
Accuplacer - 79% of students met college-readiness targets in both math and reading	<b>Meeting</b>
Accuplacer - Subgroups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with IEPs (Approaching)</li> <li>Economically Disadvantaged (Exceeding)</li> <li>Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding)</li> <li>Male (Meeting)</li> <li>Female (Meeting)</li> </ul>	<b>Meeting</b>
SAT - 88% of students met college-readiness targets in both math and reading	<b>Meeting</b>
SAT - Subgroups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economically Disadvantaged (Approaching)</li> <li>Students with a 504 Plan (Exceeding)</li> <li>Male (Exceeding)</li> <li>Female (Meeting)</li> </ul>	<b>Meeting</b>
Post-Secondary Activity Participation - School reported 82%	<b>Exceeding</b>
FAFSA Support - Baxter provided support to 81% of families/students	<b>Reported as Required</b>
<b>Other</b>	
Student Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism	<b>27% - School Reported</b>

## School Climate and Family Engagement

Panorama School Climate Survey – Family Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Climate - 99th Percentile</li> <li>Safety - 90th Percentile</li> <li>School Fit - 99th Percentile</li> </ul>	<b>Exceeding</b>  3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Student Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Climate - 20th Percentile</li> <li>Safety - 70th Percentile</li> <li>Rigorous Expectations - 20th Percentile</li> <li>Teacher-Student Relationships - 40th Percentile</li> </ul>	<b>Not Meeting</b>  Fewer than 2 of the required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Teacher Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Climate - 99th Percentile</li> </ul>	<b>Exceeding</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership - 90th Percentile</li> <li>• Professional Learning - 99th Percentile</li> <li>• Feedback and Coaching - 99th Percentile</li> </ul>	3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama School Climate Survey – Staff Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Climate - 99th Percentile</li> <li>• Leadership - 99th Percentile</li> <li>• Professional Learning - 99th Percentile</li> <li>• Feedback and Coaching - 80th Percentile</li> </ul>	<b>Exceeding</b> 3 of 3 required scales are 50% or higher compared to like schools nationally
Panorama Survey Action Plan - <i>School developed + implemented plan</i>	<b>Meeting</b>

## Organizational Sustainability

Governing Board Effectiveness	<b>Low Risk</b>
Board Meetings Held in Accordance with Bylaws and FOAA	<b>Meeting - 10 Meetings Held</b>
Timely Publication of Board Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes	<b>2 Agendas/0 Minutes</b>
Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness - <i>95% on time; 100% accurate</i>	<b>Exceeding</b>
Board Training - <i>21 requirements/13 completed (62%)</i>	<b>Not Meeting</b>
Facility Meets Local and State Requirements	<b>Meeting</b>

## Financial Management and Viability\*

<b>Near Term Measures</b>	
Current Ratio	<b>Low Risk</b>
Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand - <i>47 Days Cash on Hand</i>	<b>Moderate Risk</b>
Enrollment Variance	<b>Low Risk</b>
Debt Default - <i>None</i>	<b>Low Risk</b>
<b>Sustainability Measures</b>	
Total 3-Year Margin	<b>High Risk</b>
Debt to Asset Ratio	<b>Low Risk</b>
2-Year Cash Flow	<b>Low Risk</b>
Financial Obligations	<b>Low Risk</b>
<b>Other</b>	
Financial Planning and Budgeting - <i>School submitted 3-Year Plan</i>	<b>Meeting</b>



\*Based on FY25 QTR 4 Financials

## School Mission and Student Persistence

Mission and Key Design Implementation	Meeting
Student Persistence: School Year - 368 of 384 students (96%)	Exceeding
Student Persistence: Year-to-Year - 276 of 293 students (94%)	Exceeding

## School Customization

College Readiness - PSAT 10 and SAT 11 school average scores will meet or exceed the state average  <i>PSAT 10:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State = 972; Baxter 929</li></ul> <i>SAT 11:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State = 1038; Baxter = 1092</li></ul>	<b>Approaching</b>  Meets state average in either PSAT 10 or SAT 11, or the average school scores are within 100 points of the state average
Grade-Level Proficiency: Maine Through-Year Assessment  <i>Math:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State = 1501; Baxter = 1511</li></ul> <i>Reading</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State = 1503; Baxter = 1506</li></ul>	<b>Exceeding</b>  Exceeds state averages in both ELA and Math; or in either ELA or Math
Science Proficiency: Maine Science Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State = 36; Baxter = 42</li></ul>	<b>Exceeding</b>  Exceeds state average
Flex Fridays <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Flex Friday Elevator Pitches on October 25, 2024</i></li><li>• <i>Flex Friday Shark Tank on February 7, 2025</i></li><li>• <i>Flex Friday Exhibitions Day 1 on May 19, 2025</i></li><li>• <i>Flex Friday Exhibitions Day 2 on May 20, 2025</i></li></ul>	<b>Exceeding</b>

## SCHOOL WRITTEN ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

As a STEM charter high school in Southern Maine, Baxter Academy continues to lead with purpose and innovation in 2025 – despite growing competition, limited resources, and increasing challenges to the very foundation of public education.



*We teach our students to see challenges facing our community with clarity, intelligence, tenacity, and kindness. Our vision continues to be committed to the protection of space for them to engage deeply in solving real-world problems, to collaborate across disciplines, and to build the kind of solutions that matter – locally and globally. Our students work alongside committed community partners who recognize that their success is tied to the future of our region.*

*Baxter's academic model continues to evolve in response to the complex landscape we operate in: demographic shifts, changing industry demands, and a growing "marketplace" of schools offering STEM programs. Our budget or our building does not define us – we are defined by the strength of our mission, the clarity of our vision, and the resilience of our learning community. We offer a rigorous and responsive program that blends traditional assessment with project-based learning, grounded in curiosity, inquiry, and real-world relevance.*

*A few recent successes:*

- *Baxter Academy Students won 28 Maine Scholastic Art and Writing Awards in 2025*
- *Student received "Service before Self" award from the Portland Rotary*
- *Student awarded "Our Future South Portland" (poem to be the forward to the South Portland Comprehensive Plan and a poem published in the Portland Press Herald)*
- *Baxter Plastics Project held an art exhibit at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm (May-July)*
- *Students held their 2nd Annual Maker Fair with proceeds going to Baxter Academy*
- *Baxter Outliers won the New England First Robotics - Autonomous Robot Competition*
- *Students were featured on Maine Calling, MPBN*
- *Baxter Wheelchair Project received the Charter Commission Innovation Award Grant*
- *Students collaborated with a hospital in Western Kenya (Bondo) for the completion of their Flex Friday project*
- *Baxter Science Team awarded Scholarships and Gold & Silver awards at the Maine State Science Fair*
- *The Baxter Math Team was a finalist in the Statewide math meet*
- *The Baxter Chess Team represented Maine in the National Chess Championships in Washington, D.C.*
- *Baxter Academy hosted the AMC math competition for area schools*
- *Baxter Academy led its first Women in STEM meeting at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute*
- *Baxter Academy acquired the Baxter Van, which has made transport to field trips, nature immersion, scholarship competitions, and robotics work accessible. It has dramatically expanded our "real world offering" a reality.*



### **Baxter Academy offers an exemplary Education:**

*As a college preparatory school, we uphold a set of academic high-expectation norms that guide our entire community.*

*Students are expected to carry meaningful obligations to the community. This includes showing up for each other – demonstrating engagement during class and collaborative learning experiences, actively participating in teamwork, and stepping into leadership roles when needed. Preparation is key: students should be clear about what is needed for each class and ready to contribute as members of their learning community. Meeting deadlines and fulfilling expectations is another cornerstone; students are responsible for holding themselves accountable and following through on their commitments. We also expect thoughtful discourse and communication, which means listening, sharing, and facilitating conversations, while practicing respectful and professional written and verbal communication. Finally, care for peers matters deeply. Students are encouraged to be both self-aware and group-aware in learning environments, and to practice positive social management as part of a healthy and supportive community.*

*These expectations are not merely academic – they reflect the values that prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship. In honoring these norms, students learn to navigate complex challenges, collaborate across differences, and take ownership of their growth. The classroom becomes more than a place for content delivery; it becomes a space where curiosity, responsibility, and respect drive deeper learning.*

*Faculty and staff support these norms by modeling professionalism, providing clear guidance, and holding students accountable with consistency and compassion. Families, too, are essential partners reinforcing the importance of follow-through, resilience, and engagement beyond the school day. Together, we cultivate a learning environment where high standards are matched with high support. We believe every student can rise to these expectations – and that in doing so, they develop not only the academic skills but also the character and habits of mind that will serve them well for life.*

### **Monitoring our progress:**

*Baxter is a collaborative community of educators dedicated to continuous growth. Faculty meet weekly – in full staff, department, and advisory teams – to improve instruction and support student well-being.*

*We start the year with three days of training (with added time for new teachers) and end with two days of reflection and planning. Two full PD days and a half day are held during the school year. This year, we've focused on portfolios, support for multilingual learners, and community partnerships.*



*Departments have clarified learning goals and growth measures, while faculty teams have advanced work in social-emotional learning and equity in STEM. This transition is working.*

### **1. Enrollment**

*After build-back from COVID, Baxter has now reached full enrollment (399 students). This is the result of our increased successes in the community, expanded marketing, and word of mouth. Our retention rate is high.*

### **2. Chronic Absenteeism**

*This continues to be a major issue nationwide. Our peer schools face even deeper challenges. Portland and Deering High Schools (both within the area) have Chronic Absenteeism rates of 35% and 47%, respectively. We believe that this is tied to mental health, post-COVID behaviors, and the natural connection within the school due to a lack of extracurricular activities. We continue to work hard to address this through collaboration with CountMEIn, strategic parent/teacher engagement, and expanded club activities. However, it should be noted that there are students who are chronically absent whose grades do not suffer.*

### **3. Academic Performance**

*While student perceptions around academic rigor remain mixed, the outcomes tell a more compelling story. Retention is high. Baxter Academy students continue to outperform their peers statewide in math, science, and English Language Arts, as reflected in the most recent testing data. Our students are not only exceeding state expectations – they are graduating at higher rates, gaining admission to competitive colleges and universities, and earning recognition through statewide academic competitions. Their success also extends beyond traditional academics. Baxter students are securing internships with institutions like Maine Medical Center and FMI, building real-world skills in high-performance environments.*

*There is a gap between these measurable outcomes and how some students perceive the day-to-day classroom experience. This disconnect continues to inform our work as we ask: How can we link challenge and success more visibly and meaningfully for students?*

*We've taken several steps toward that goal. Cell phone use has been eliminated during instructional time, allowing for more focused engagement. Our Baxter Scholars Program has entered its second year with continued success. Flex Friday projects remain a dynamic part of our program and will evolve further this coming year, as students begin responding to RFPs submitted by our community partners – bringing relevance and ownership even more directly into their learning experience.*



*Baxter Academy continues to monitor and invest in women-in-stem participation. It is only through closely tracking this information that we have the opportunity to continue to make changes. Our current efforts include a women-in-stem annual (student-led/designed) conference, student presentations to our full staff, and course/curriculum planning.*

#### **4. Community Partnerships Matter**

*At Baxter Academy, our commitment to “The real world starts now” is a framework for how we connect students to the world around them. As a school rooted in our community, we partner with local organizations, industry leaders, and institutions to extend learning beyond the classroom in meaningful ways.*

*These partnerships take many forms: dual enrollment opportunities with colleges like Southern Maine Community College, Central Maine and Husson University; mentorship and internship placements with organizations such as ReVision Energy, Northern Light Hospital, and Greater Portland Council of Governments; and experiential learning with groups like Citizen’s Climate Lobby, the Portland Museum of Art, and Cold Current Kelp. The school has increased field trips so that teachers are taking students into the community every two weeks.*

*Whether our students are working with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, exploring food insecurity with Wayside Food Program and Good Shepherd Food Bank, or developing early STEM literacy with schools like Connors Elementary and Windham Middle School, they are engaging in real-world challenges and solutions.*

*These collaborations help students build skills, clarify interests, and see themselves as capable contributors in this moment.*

<i>Inter-government Panel on Climate Change</i>	<i>Windham Middle School</i>	<i>Husson University</i>
<i>Greater Portland Council of Governments</i>	<i>Black Fern Tree Service</i>	<i>Cold Current Kelp</i>
<i>Greater Androscoggin Humane Society</i>	<i>Portland Museum of Art</i>	<i>Portland Pipeline</i>
<i>Chebeague &amp; Cumberland Land Trust</i>	<i>Maine Community Solar</i>	<i>Lighthouse Bikes</i>

<i>Boys &amp; Girls Clubs of Southern Maine</i>	<i>Harvey Mudd University</i>	<i>The Mainely Dog</i>
<i>Southern Maine Community College</i>	<i>Citizen's Climate Lobby</i>	<i>Smiling Hill Farm</i>
<i>Cumberland Chebeague Land Trust</i>	<i>Wayside Food Program</i>	<i>Wilburs of Maine</i>
<i>Central Maine Community College</i>	<i>Northern Light Hospital</i>	<i>ReVision Energy</i>
<i>Bath Fire &amp; Rescue Department</i>	<i>Portland Public Library</i>	<i>The Green Ladle</i>
<i>Longfellow Elementary School</i>	<i>Flores</i>	<i>Fork Food Labs</i>
<i>FMI, a Spirit AeroSystems Co.</i>	<i>Portland Pie Company</i>	<i>A Path for Rails</i>
<i>Mr. Drew and His Animals Too</i>	<i>Pride's Corner Church</i>	<i>Seeds of Peace</i>
<i>Maine Principal's Association</i>	<i>Evo Rock and Fitness</i>	<i>Mercy Hospital</i>
<i>University of Southern Maine</i>	<i>Maine Medical Center</i>	<i>Shores Church</i>
<i>Maine Needs &amp; Preble Street</i>	<i>Leavitt and Sons Deli</i>	<i>Blaze Partners</i>
<i>Community Housing of Maine</i>	<i>Two Fat Cats Bakery</i>	<i>The Bark Yard</i>
<i>Connors Elementary School</i>	<i>The Studio, Portland</i>	<i>EducateMaine</i>
<i>Maine Youth Action Network</i>	<i>Maine Venture Fund</i>	<i>Roux Institute</i>
<i>Wells Reserve at Laudholm</i>	<i>Coastal Accounting</i>	<i>Maine Monitor</i>
<i>Good Shepherd Food Bank</i>	<i>CyberStart America</i>	<i>Preble Street</i>
<i>1000 Drones for 1000 Girls</i>	<i>Maine Public Radio</i>	<i>Port Property</i>
<i>First Amendment Museum</i>	<i>Maine Boys to Men</i>	<i>Maine Needs</i>
<i>Blue Marble Geographics</i>	<i>Bangor Daily News</i>	<i>Spark's Ark</i>
<i>Partners for World Health</i>	<i>Breakwater School</i>	<i>Covetrus</i>

## 5. Finances

Baxter Academy continues to prioritize fiscal responsibility. The modest deficit we anticipate this year is largely driven by rising costs tied to federal policy shifts, inflation, and a more cautious stance among some of our donors.

In planning for the year ahead, we chose not to increase our reliance on fundraising. We anticipate that philanthropic dollars will be in high demand, with many donors shifting their focus toward immediate and urgent needs created by cuts to federal programs. While we remain realistic about the challenges, we also see potential – particularly in building relationships with industry partners, trade organizations, and funders who are interested in the kind of future-facing work Baxter is doing.

We are also seeing some renewed interest in charter schools at the policy level, which may open additional opportunities. Still, we're approaching this moment with caution. Our spending remains conservative, and thanks to careful stewardship, our cash position is stronger than it has been in several years.

## 6. Our Goals

As we look ahead to the 2024-2025 school year, our priorities are grounded in what we're learning about our students, our program, and the evolving needs of the world they are preparing to enter.

- a. *Strengthen Core Academic Foundations* - We've seen a notable shift in the math readiness of our incoming students, particularly in foundational areas like Algebra. In response, we've restructured our math curriculum to meet students where they are and to rebuild essential skills. We expect this intentional focus to result in stronger performance in the next cycle of academic testing.
- b. *Deepen the Connection Between Rigor and Student Experience* - We are continuing our work to bridge the gap between student perception and academic outcomes. This year, we will - expand the Baxter Scholars program to recognize students taking on sustained academic challenge; increase the complexity and expectations of Flex Friday projects directed by intelligence from external partners. We will expand formal proposals (in the form of an RFP) community partnerships, and cross-disciplinary presentations; bring in more outside experts to evaluate student work and provide authentic, real-world feedback; launch an Honors Lunch series to focus high level academic work for our most ambitious students; and continue to develop advanced coursework with a focus on preparing students for AP-level work through targeted teacher training and financial support for AP exam access.
- c. *Cultivate Leadership and Cross-Disciplinary Learning* - We will continue to invest in opportunities for both students and staff to lead, collaborate, and share their expertise

*across disciplines – connecting humanities, STEM, and design in ways that reflect our belief in integrated, project-based learning.*

- d. Enrich the Learning Environment, On and Off Campus - We remain committed to maintaining a vibrant and healthy school atmosphere. This includes - expanding student-created murals to bring color, voice, and pride into our shared spaces; and growing our use of off-site and expeditionary learning–through partnerships with industry, field-based environmental education, and deeper relationships with local leaders and organizations.*
- e. Design for Global Impact - Baxter will continue its work at the intersection of design and humanitarian need. Our ongoing collaboration with hospitals in western Kenya remains a central focus, and we are excited about a potential new partnership with an international energy company, which would expand our students' exposure to global energy and sustainability challenges.*