

Maine Charter School Commission

September, 2017

On May 9 and June 13, 2017, announced on-site visits were made to Snow Pond Arts Academy. The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) review team of 3 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, 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	John Bird
Commission Member	Jana Lapoint
Commission Member	Shelley Reed
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 2016-2017

September 2017

Section 1: School Overview

School Name	Snow Pond Arts Academy (SPAA)
Address	8 Goldenrod Lane, Sidney, ME 04330

Board Chair	Janna Townsend
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Head of School	Deborah Emery
Principal	Heather King

Year Opened	School Year 2016-2017
Years in Operation	1
Number of Sending Districts	27
Grades Served	9 - 11
Number of Students	106 (October 1, 2016 "count day")
Teacher – Student Ratio	1:15

Mission	Snow Pond Arts Academy (SPAA) aims to transform students' lives and contribute to the cultural capital of Central 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.
Vision	Snow Pond Arts Academy (SPAA) will serve as a center of excellence for both academic and arts learning in Central Maine. Snow Pond 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, Theatre, and Dance, and ultimately the inclusion of all the Creative and Visual Arts, Snow Pond 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 vitally important in the next generation of citizens. As a community of engaged learners, Snow Pond 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 & Creative Arts, hiring talented arts educators who bring their expertise to Central Maine, and further collaborating with other educational arts, and cultural organizations, Snow Pond will become an integral part of the community and a much needed beacon for the arts.

Section 2: Indicator Summary Table

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

¹ SPAA did not collect data on Personal Learning Plan goal completion.

² In math 73% of students met or exceeded individual annual growth by RIT score. The 85% target was not met for math.

³ SPAA's average daily attendance rate was 90% and did not meet the 95% target.

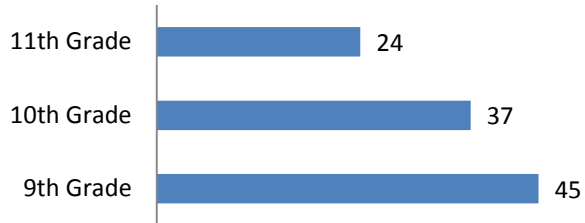
⁴ 86% of students enrolled on October 1, 2016 were still enrolled on the last day of school. The 90% target was not met.

⁵ SPAA received a letter from the Maine Charter School Commission requesting minutes be posted in a timely manner.

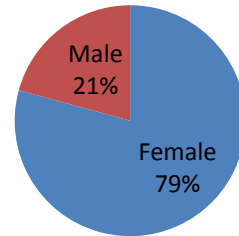
⁶ SPAA had one parent conference in the 2016-17 school year. There was 50% parent participation. The school did not meet the 90% target. SPAA was unable to report on the documentation of parent participation in volunteer activities due to the turnover in administration. Anecdotally the school reported that it did have parent volunteers for a variety of activities.

Section 3: Demographics

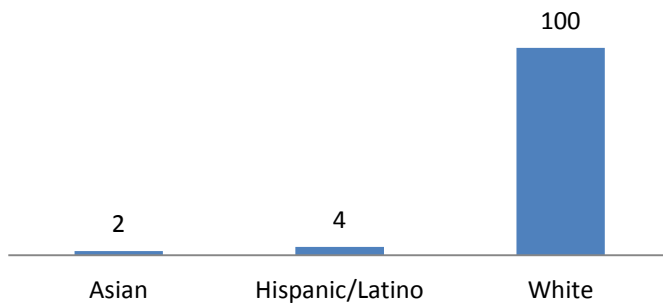
Enrollment by Grade



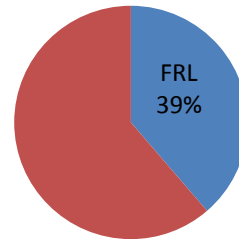
Sex



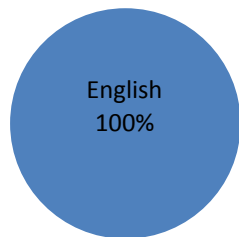
Race/Ethnicity



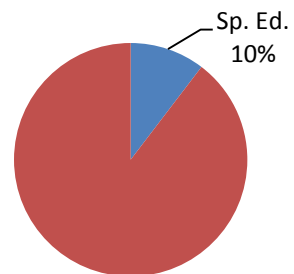
Free/Reduced Lunch



Language



Special Education



Section 4: Academics

SPAA partially met its academic proficiency and growth targets.

Targets:

Proficiency

State Assessments:

- Year 1- Gather baseline data and set goal for proficiency on State Assessments in Reading and Math

School Assessments:

- 80% of students will meet all of their Personal Learning Plan (PLP) goals
- Year 1- Gather baseline data and set goal for proficiency on school selected assessment in Reading and Math

Growth

State Assessments:

- Year 1- Gather baseline data and set goal for Same cohort growth on State Assessment in ELA a math

School Assessments:

- 85% of students will meet or exceed individual expected annual growth by RIT score as identified by NWEA in reading.
- 85% of students will meet or exceed individual expected annual growth by RIT score as identified by NWEA in math.

Achievement Gaps

- Year 1- Gather baseline data and set goal for decreasing gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups on Maine State Assessment and school selected assessment in reading and math.

Performance:

Snow Pond Arts Academy administered the MEA and gathered baseline data for student academic proficiency and growth. Data will be analyzed to set goals for proficiency and growth for the remainder of the charter contract.

16 students (94%) in 11th grade participated in the MEA. The results are shown in the table below.

MEA Grade 11 (16 students)	% At or Above State Expectations	% Below or Well below State Expectations
MATH	37.5	62.5
ELA	<i>not reportable*</i>	<i>not reportable*</i>

The percent of students *At or Above State Expectations* in math was slightly higher than the state average of 34.9%.

**While results were reported to the Maine Charter School Commission results for ELA are not publicly reportable due to the small class size and maintaining student confidentiality.*

On the NWEA, which was administered to SPAA's 9th and 10th grade students as the school selected assessment, 85% of students met or exceeded individual annual growth by RIT score reading as identified by NWEA. SPAA met the 85% target. In math 73% of students met or exceeded individual annual growth by RIT score. The 85% target was not met for math.

SPAA did not report on Personal Learning Plan goal completion.

Section 5: Enrollment

SPAA partially met its enrollment targets.

Student Enrollment Targets:

- A minimum of 90% of the students enrolled on Oct 1 of any school year will still be enrolled as of the last day of that school year.
- By the end of each school year a minimum of 90% of students enrolled on the last day of school will indicate their intent to return for the following year.

Performance:

86% of students enrolled on October 1, 2016 were still enrolled on the last day of school. The 90% target was not met.

At the end of the school year 91% of students indicated intent to enroll meeting the 90% target.

Section 6: Attendance

SPAA did not meet its attendance target.

Attendance Targets:

- Average Daily Attendance will be 95%.

Performance:

SPAA's average daily attendance rate was 90% and did not meet the 95% target.

Section 7: Post-Secondary Readiness

SPAA met its post-secondary readiness target.

Target:

- Year 1- Gather data and set goal for remainder of charter contract

Performance: SPAA explored dual-enrollment opportunities and partnerships with colleges and universities.

Section 8: Governance

SPAA partially met its governance targets.

Targets:

- Meetings of the governing board held monthly
- Evidence of bylaws in place and reviewed
- Meeting minutes publicly available

Performance:

The governing board met monthly and committees met more often as needed. The school’s bylaws were in place. Meeting minutes were publicly posted to the school’s website with inconsistency. In May, 2017 SPAA received a letter from the Maine Charter School Commission requesting minutes be posted in a timely manner.

2016-2017 Governing Board	
Board Co-Chair	Anne Hammond
Board Co-Chair	Carl Steidel
Board Member	Sherry Gilbert
Board Member	Deb Levenseller
Board Member	Gail Levinsky
Board Member	Kathy Moore
Board Member	Julie Richard
Board Member	Janna Townsend
Board Member	Tom Vigue

Section 9: Administration

In its first year SPAA suffered from a lack of consistent and experienced leadership. Months into the school year the governing board hired an experienced Interim Head of School. During the following months much progress was made in many areas of the school’s operation. A School Improvement Plan was developed by the Interim Head of School and governing board and was presented to the Maine Charter School Commission. This plan began its implantation in the 2016-17 school year and continued to serve the school well, guiding it into its second year under a permanent Head of School and a new Principal.

Section 10: School Social and Academic Climate

SPAA met its school climate targets.

Targets:

- Initial data will indicate baseline in year 1. Measurable goals will be set to reduce instances of bullying, harassment, or other abusive practices
- School will participate in the state student climate surveys; data compared with comparison schools
- SPAA will create and disseminate anonymous surveys to parents and staff annually.
- Goals will be set after baseline data collected and analyzed

Performance:

SPAA reported 3 reportable instances of bullying, harassment, or other abusive practices to the Maine Department of Education, establishing a baseline and meeting the target. SPAA participated in Panorama Education Surveys in spring 2017. Families, students, and staff/teachers provided feedback for SPAA. The table on the following page, part of a larger Insights Report provided by Panorama Education, summarizes SPAA’s strengths and areas of growth, as demonstrated by the survey results.

	STRENGTHS	AREAS OF GROWTH
STUDENT	<p>+HIGH STUDENT PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL SAFETY: Students' perceptions of School Safety place Snow Pond Arts Academy near the 90th national percentile¹ for this topic. Compared to other high schools nationally, Snow Pond Arts Academy is near the 99th percentile for School Safety. In particular, 11th grade students and male students report the highest perceptions of School Safety (+8% and +5% higher than the school average, respectively).</p>	<p>-NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS FROM 9th GRADE STUDENTS: Students in 9th grade responded least favorably on four out of six topics (Teacher-Student Relationships, School Safety, Rigorous Expectations, Grit) and second to least favorably on School Engagement. What might be causing students in 9th grade to have lower perceptions in these key topics? Are there strategies that are implemented in 10th grade that increase students' perceptions in these areas that can be shared with 9th grade students?</p> <p>-GRIT, PARTICULARLY FOR MALE STUDENTS AND 9TH GRADE STUDENTS: At 57% favorable, Snow Pond Arts Academy's overall score in Grit is close to the MCSC average. Yet, this score places Snow Pond near the 40th national percentile, and 9th grade students and male students report lower perceptions of Grit (both -7% from the school average).</p>
FAMILY	<p>+HIGH FAMILY PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL SAFETY: Like students, families report high scores on school safety at Snow Pond (2% higher than the MCSC average score on this topic). Snow Pond is also near the 60th percentile nationally compared to <i>all schools</i>, and near the 99th percentile when compared <i>just to other high schools</i>.</p>	<p>-FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: While Snow Pond's Family Engagement score is near the 70th national percentile compared to other high schools, this topic received the lowest favorability from families of any topic. Low scores persist across subgroups (e.g. gender of student, grade level of student, and length of time at Snow Pond).</p> <p>-PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS WITH FEMALE STUDENTS: Parents who have identified their student as female report lower scores across 4 out of 6 topics (Family Engagement, Grit, School Climate, School Fit, and School Safety) with the largest difference in the School Fit topic. Why might families with female students perceive Snow Pond differently than families with male students when reflecting on these topics?</p>
STAFF & TEACHER	<p>+ POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL CLIMATE: At 76% favorable, Snow Pond's School Climate score is 6 percentage points higher than the MCSC average and near the 80th percentile compared to <i>all schools</i>. When compared <i>just to high schools</i>, Snow Pond is near the 99th percentile on this topic.</p>	<p>- FEEDBACK AND COACHING: Of all topics, teachers report least favorably on Feedback and Coaching with an overall score of 19% favorable. This score places Snow Pond 15 percentage points below the MCSC average and near the 10th national percentile compared to <i>all schools</i> and near the 20th national percentile compared to <i>high schools</i>.</p> <p>- STUDENT GRIT: Teachers perceive student Grit as less favorable than both students and families. Students and families seem to agree about the level of student Grit (students reporting 57% favorability and families reporting 56% favorability on this topic), while teachers report student Grit as 34% favorable. It's worth exploring why teachers have lower perception of student grit than students and families.</p>

Section 11: Parent and Community Engagement

SPAA partially met its parent and community engagement targets.

Targets:

- 90% parental involvement in at least one parent/teacher conference per year
- SPAA will send, at a minimum, monthly communications to parents via e-mail and/or web-posting to advise them of school happenings and important upcoming dates and decisions.
- SPAA will document parent/guardian participation in volunteer groups and activities to gather baseline information for year 1 and set goals for improvement moving forward
- In year 1 the school will identify specific events that it would like to have high parent participation in and identify a base line for involvement based on sign in sheets. In year 2 the school will set goals for improvement moving forward.

Performance:

SPAA had one parent conference in the 2016-17 school year. There was 50% parent participation. The school did not meet the 90% target.

Newsletters were sent out each week, one from the principal and one from the student services director via the school's web site and email, meeting the target of a minimum of monthly communications to parents.

SPAA was unable to report on the documentation of parent participation in volunteer activities due to the turnover in administration. Anecdotally the school reported that it did have parent volunteers for a variety of activities.

SPAA identified several events for high participation: monthly recitals featuring students, end of year barbecue in 2017, and one-acts dinner theater nights. SPAA met the target for identifying high participation activities.

Section 12: Finances

SPAA met its finance targets.

Targets:

- Report on the percentage variation between budget and actual revenue and expenditures
- Submit quarterly financials to the Commission
- Completion of annual financial audit

Performance: SPAA reported budgetary information and submitted quarterly financials to the Maine Charter School Commission. An annual audit was not needed in the school's first year.

Section 13: Facilities & Maintenance

SPAA met its facilities and Maintenance targets.

Targets:

The School will provide an annual report related to:

- Percentage of over or under cost projection on facilities (+/- 5%)
- Rate of room utilization
- Daily cleaning logs
- Maintenance requests and time completed
- Updated 1-3-5 year plan for capital improvements

Performance:

SPAA contracts with the New England Music Camp (NEMC) for leased space on the campus of the NEMC. These leased spaces include: educational spaces, dining spaces, performance spaces, and with the right to use common entrances, hallways, rest rooms, elevators, walkways and stairways in the buildings in common with others. Space for parking is also made available to SPAA.

SPAA reports that in general, facilities have been adequate. Facilities have been maintained in a satisfactory manner in respect to appropriate maintenance, cleanliness, and access to all spaces e.g. snow removal.

Section 14: Food Service

SPAA met its Food Service targets.

Targets:

- food service costs
- number of students served/frequency
- free and reduced lunch data

Performance:

Approximately 35 students participated regularly in SPAA’s school lunch program provided by Snow Pond Center for the Arts. At the end of the school year SPAA had a negative (-) balance of approximately \$17,000 for the Food Service Program.

Section 15: Transportation

SPAA met its Transportation targets.

Targets:

- transportation costs
- number of students transported/frequency

Performance:

During the 2016-17 school year SPAA provided daily transportation services for approximately 65% (60 students) of its students via school bus transportation services provided by RSU 18 and by two, leased school vans.

- RSU 18 provided three bus routes: 1. Gardiner Area Route (11 students), Fairfield/Winslow Area Route (31 students) and the Oakland/In District Route (7 students).
- Two school vans transport 11 students from the Brunswick/Topsham area.

Also, three students from the Pittsfield area received a gas card to offset some of their transportation costs to SPAA.

Bus and van routes have remained the same throughout the 16/17 school year, although some minor changes were made in pickup and drop of locations. Routes extend beyond SPAA's required 15 mile transportation radius.

Section 16: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation (For mission and vision see page 2)

SPAA offers content area classes and dance, music, and theater classes for its students providing a rich combination of arts and academics.

Section 17: Authorizer Notes (in place of 'Commendations' and 'Recommendations')

In Snow Pond Arts Academy's first year (2016-17) the school dealt with many difficulties. The Maine Charter School Commission staff and review team made visits to the school and identified specific concerns requiring attention. In response, the school created a School Improvement Plan (exhibit 1, attached) to address each of the following areas: governance, finance, leadership, and programming. SPAA began its work on the SIP during the 2016-2017 school year and made progress as noted below.

Governance:

- In response to the lack of policies the governing board adopted a comprehensive Policy book.
- The governing board developed a self-evaluation tool that will be administered in order to give direction to further work.

Finance:

- SPAA's budget includes a plan for repayment of debt
- The head of school has explored several cost-saving measures

Leadership:

- In response to the lack of continuous and qualified leadership SPAA hired a qualified full time Head of School and a full time Principal.
- In response to a lack of leadership and expertise in the area of special education SPAA hired a part time special education director.

Programming:

- In response to the lack of special education services during 2016-17 SPAA provided compensatory services to all students who were offered and accepted services.
- In response to its curriculum challenges SPAA opted to discontinue its use of K12 for its curriculum. Work was done to map out standards based on the Maine Learning Results.
- Teachers had 3 days of professional development the summer and Friday afternoons are now set aside for weekly PD for teachers.