

Maine Charter School Commission



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2017-2018

September 2018

On **May 22nd** and **June 14th** 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, and MCSC Director of Program Management. The visiting team held interviews with school leadership, 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	Jana Lapoint
Commission	Shelley Reed
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post

School’s Mission	<i>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.</i>
School’s Vision	<i>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.</i>

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.

2018 -19 School Information

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

Governing Board

Board President/Chairman	Janna Townsend
Board Vice President/Chairman	Carl Steidel
Board Treasurer	Julie Richard
Board Member	Sherry Gilbert
Board Member	Debra Levenseller
Board Member	Mike Thorn
	Jeff Desrosiers
	Jessica Crowell

Head of School	Deborah Emery
Principal	Heather King
Special Education Director	Christine Sullivan

Year Opened	2016
Years in Operation	2
Number of Sending Districts	32
Grades Served	9 – 12
Current Enrollment	145*
Students on Waiting List	5*

*As of October 1, 2017 certified enrollment date.

Section 1: Overview

Snow Pond Arts Academy is a performing and visual arts-focused, free, public charter high school currently serving 50 towns in Maine. The school is located in a rural setting on Messalonskee Lake and shares a campus with Snow Pond Center for the Arts, home of the prestigious New England Music Camp.

Snow Pond Arts Academy's proficiency-based, creative learning experience, is aligned with the Maine Learning Results and the National Core Arts Standards. Since 2016, Snow Pond Arts Academy has been working at transforming its innovative educational system to better meet the individual needs of all Maine Learners. All students have personal learning goals which help support their academic interests, creative passions, and learning styles. This is designed to intrinsically motivate and challenge all students through the arts.

Snow Pond's proficiency based, arts-centered, customized learning and graduation policies ensure that all students leave as highly literate and problem-solving skilled graduates. During their high school career at Snow Pond, students have access to dual enrollment courses, advanced placement courses, online courses, job shadow and community service opportunities, as well as a rich performing and visual arts curriculum.

Each learner must meet a common and essential set of demanding proficiencies. Snow Pond Arts Academy's qualified staff works hard to help students meet these rigorous expectations by offering multiple pathways and methods of demonstrating learning.

Snow Pond recognizes that all students learn in different ways and times and the school provides multiple opportunities for learners to gain proficiency. Its system is focused on what its graduates learn, rather than on the amount of time it takes them to reach rigorous graduation proficiencies.

Snow Pond's goal is to prepare students for success in college, career and citizenship while fostering a lifelong passion for the arts.

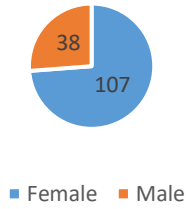
Great education is both the accumulation of knowledge and the cultivation of engagement, imagination, and the understanding of civic and social responsibility. SPAA students will be more than musicians and artists; they will be prepared for a lifetime of learning, and active citizenship.

Section 2: Indicator Summary Table

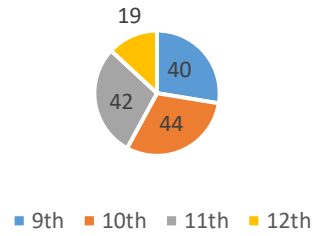
Indicator	Meets Contract Agreement	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
Student Academic Proficiency	X		
Student Academic Growth			X
Achievement Gaps in Proficiency and Growth Between Major Student Subgroups	X		
Student Attendance			X
Enrollment	X		
Post-Secondary Readiness	X		
Financial Performance and Sustainability	X		
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	X		
Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program	X		
Transportation	X		
School Social and Academic Climate	X		
Parent and Community Engagement		X	

Section 3: Demographics

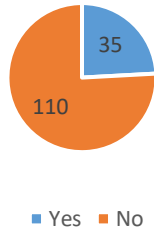
Gender



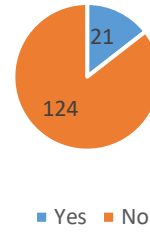
Grade



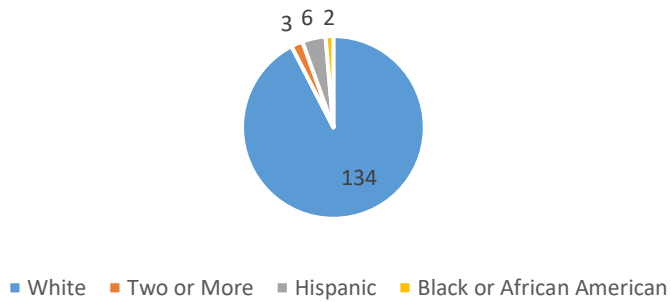
Economically Disadvantaged



Special Education



Race-Ethnicity



Language



Section 4: Academics

Student Academic Proficiency

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Proficiency on State Assessments in reading	Establish baseline	62.17% proficient	Met
Proficiency on State Assessment in Math	Establish Baseline	Not publicly reportable	Met
Proficiency on NWEA - reading	Establish Baseline	Percent of students at or above norm grade level mean: Grade 9 67% Grade 10 56% Grade 11 31%	Met
Proficiency on NWEA - math	Establish Baseline	Percent of students at or above norm grade level mean: Grade 9 36% Grade 10 58% Grade 11 31%	Met
Proficiency on school designed assessment program measuring Common Core ELA and Math as well as Maine Learning Results for Science and History	80% of students will meet all of their personal learning plan goals	95% of students reached proficiency on core standards in academic and arts classes as determined by school developed assessments.	Met

Discussion

In the 4 areas requiring the establishment of baseline data, the school met the target.

On the state assessment in reading 62.17% of 11th grade students scored proficient. State assessment results in math are not publicly reportable to due a small 'n' size and maintaining student confidentiality; however, the Commission does have access to this data and considers it as part of the school's overall academic assessment review.

SPAA administered the NWEA in the 2017-18 school year and reported the percentage of students at or above grade level mean by grade level in both ELA and math. The school met the target of collecting baseline data.

On the school designed assessment program the school exceeded its 80% target with 95% of students reaching proficiency on core standards in academic and arts classes as determined by school developed assessments. The school completed an analysis of the course offerings to assure a rigorous course schedule ad plans to offer higher level courses for the 2018-19 school year.

Student Academic Growth

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Growth in school selected standardized test in Reading	85% of students will meet or exceed individual expected annual growth by RIT score as identified by NWEA	% of students met expected growth by RIT score: Grade 9 66% Grade 10 74% Grade 11 62%	Did not meet
Growth in school selected standardized test in Math	85% of students will meet or exceed individual expected annual growth by RIT score as identified by NWEA	% of students met expected growth by RIT score” Grade 9 38% Grade 10 58% Grade 11 34%	Did not meet

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy did not meet its growth targets based on NWEA. After analyzing the results the school Identified areas of focus including higher level mathematics skills, geometry, editing for grammar usage, key ideas and details in literary and informational text, and language craft and structure.

Achievement Gaps in Proficiency and Growth Between Major Student Subgroups

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Gaps in proficiency and growth between major students subgroups on Maine State Assessments (MEA) - reading	Establish baseline	Not publicly reportable	Met
Gaps in proficiency and growth between major students subgroups on Maine State Assessments (MEA) - math	Establish baseline	Not publicly reportable	Met

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy met the target with the administration of the MEA and establishment of baseline data for setting future targets. State assessment results for individual student subgroups are not publicly reportable to due a small ‘n’ size and maintaining student confidentiality; however, the Commission does have access to this data and considers it as part of the school’s overall academic assessment review.

Section 5: Attendance and Enrollment

Student Attendance

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Average Daily Attendance Rate	Average daily attendance will be 95%	90% ADA	Did not meet
Individual Student Attendance Rate	Individual student attendance rate will be 95%	Individual student attendance rates: 34% between 95-100% 37% between 90-94% 22% between 80-89% 7% between 70-79%	Did not meet

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy did not meet its attendance targets; its ADA was 5% below the target and only 35% of students met the individual attendance target.

The school reported that its rural location makes it difficult for students who miss the bus at regional hubs to get to school. It also reported that late start days and early release Fridays had increased absences. For the 2018-2019 academic year the school has plans to increase attendance including five full academic days per week with fewer early releases and the elimination of late starts. The school also plans to use distance learning equipment to connect with ill students working at home, build in work at home days during storm closing days, have regular contact from staff when students miss school. Additionally, the school updated its student information system to update incorrectly entered contact information.

Enrollment

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Student Retention	A minimum of 90% of the students enrolled on October 1 of any school year will still be enrolled as the last day of that school year.	95%	Met
Student re-enrollment from one year to next	At the end of the 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.	98% reenrollment for 2018–2019	Met

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy met its 90% student retention target with 95% during the year student retention. The school met its re-enrollment target of 90% with 98% of students planning to return for the following year as of the last day of school.

Post-Secondary Readiness

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Graduation Rate	Establish baseline	100%	Met
Success in Dual Enrollment courses	Establish baseline	69% passing rate	Met
Enrollment in post secondary institutions	Establish baseline	95% of graduates	Met

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy met the targets of gathering post-secondary readiness data and establishing baseline data for setting future targets. The graduation rate was 100% and the percent of passing grades in dual enrollment was 69%. 20 students took 30 dual enrollment courses during the 2017-18 school year.

Students from the school's first graduating class were accepted to over twenty schools across the United States including Ithaca, University Of Southern Maine, University of Maine in Orono, University of Maine in Farmington, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of Illinois, Rutgers, Wheaton College, Wagner, and more. Some students received substantial scholarships in the arts and academic programs.

Section 6: Finances

Financial Performance and Sustainability

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Financial performance and sustainability	Percentage Variance between budget and actual revenue and expenses (+/- 10%)	Expenditure variance -6.95% Revenue variance -5.32%	Met
Financial performance and sustainability	Balance Sheet (Quarterly Review)	Reviewed quarterly	Met
Financial performance and sustainability	Presence of management findings of deficiencies on an audit report, and success in correcting findings (Annual external audit report for each fiscal year)	Report submitted	Met

Discussion

For the 2017-18 school budget the year end expenditure variance is 5.32% less than budgeted and the year end revenue variance is 6.95% less than budgeted. The school met the target for being within 10%.

The most recent completed audit is for FY 2016-2017. A copy of the audit, management letter, and corrective action plan was submitted in February 2018. The school reports all findings of deficiency have been addressed.

The school's finance committee meets monthly to review financials and approves them to be sent to the board.

Section 7: Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	Governance Board meetings will be held at least monthly	Monthly meetings were held	Met
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	Evidence of bylaws and policies in place are regularly reviewed.	Bylaws were reviewed	Met
Governance Board Performance and Stewardship	Meeting agendas are made publicly available (posted within 10 days of approval).	Agendas and minutes were posted	Met

Discussion

Snow Pond Arts Academy held monthly board meetings in its conference room at the school. Committee meetings were held prior to each board meeting. Spring meeting minutes were delayed in posting due to the transition of a new webmaster.

Section 8: Facilities & Maintenance, Food Service, and Transportation

Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Adequacy of Facilities	Head of School will provide an annual report to the Board of Directors related to: % over or under cost projection on facilities (+/- 5%).	Report provided to governing board	Met

Discussion

The school met the target of reporting on facilities. The Board facilities committee and Head of School worked with Snow Pond Center for the Arts to revise and develop a new lease that includes cleaning and maintenance.

Transportation

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Adequacy of Transportation	Head of School will provide an annual report to the Board of Directors related to SPAA transportation costs and number of students transported.	Report provided to governing board	Met

Discussion

The Head of School provided an annual report on transportation to the Board of Directors. The school plans to continue sharing bus services with other local charter schools for the 2018-19 school year.

Food Service

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Adequacy of Food Service	Head of School will provide an annual report to the Board of Directors related to food service costs, number of students served/frequency and free and reduced lunch data.	Report provided to governing board	Met

Discussion

The Head of School provided an annual report on food service to the Board of Directors. During the 2017-18 academic year Snow Pond Center for the Arts managed Snow Pond Arts Academy's food service. For the 2018-19 school year, SPAA will be managing its own food service accounts and production through a vendor.

Section 9: School Climate

School Social and Academic Climate

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Instances of bullying, harassment or other abusive behavior	Fewer than 5% of students will be involved in harassment, bullying or other abusive behavior.	2%	Met
Confidential surveys of parents, staff and students regarding social and academic climate	100% parents, staff and students will have the opportunity to complete the Panorama survey.	Panorama Survey was administered to staff and students	Met

Discussion

SPAA met its target of fewer than 5% of students involved in bullying with 2%.

Panorama Education surveys were administered to students, parents and teachers/staff. On the school climate scale students responded around the 90th percentile nationally as compared to other non-urban high schools with a free/reduced lunch population between 30%-70%. When compared to similar school nationally both teachers/staff and parents scored around the 99th percentile.

Section 10: Parent and Community Engagement

Parent and Community Engagement

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Educational Partnerships in the Community	SPAA will pursue involvement with community and corporate partners	Work with grant writer for fostering partnerships	Met
Parent Communication System	SPAA will send at a minimum, monthly communications to parents via email and/or web postings to advise them of school happenings and important upcoming dates and decisions.	Emails and web postings were done, but due to system error some families did not receive the communications	Partially met
Parent Participation in their child's education and operation of school	90% parent participation in at least one conference each year.	80% conference attendance	Did not meet
Parent Participation in their child's education and operation of school	SPAA will document parent/guardian participation in volunteer groups and activities and gather baseline information	Specific number not reported	Did not meet

Discussion

The school is working with a grant writer to determine foundations and grant writing opportunities and met with educational partnership target.

The school attempted to communicate with all families, but due to system errors some families were unable to receive messages. The school partially met its parent communication target.

With 80% conference participation, the school did not meet its 90% target for parent participation in education and operation of the school.

The SPAA parent group met monthly. The school reported a high percentage of parents attended all recitals and performances. Parents also volunteered at school dances and proms. The school reports that between 6-10 parents attended parent group meetings and approximately 50-60 parents attended bi-monthly performances. The school also sponsored a parent involvement night for its at risk population and had 8-10 parents attend.

Section 11: Administration

Snow Pond Arts Academy began its second year under the continued leadership from year one. After a turnover in leadership in year one, the school hired leaders who effectively manage the academic programs and fiscal operations at SPAA. The school is led by a full time Head of School and a full time principal.

A Director of Special Education provides leadership in effectively managing SPAA's special education program. The Director works with the Head of School and Leadership Team to ensure the school meets all required state and federal laws and statutes.

Section 12: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation

(See Page 2 for School's Mission and Vision)

Snow Pond Arts Academy continued into the 2017-18 school year with a strong commitment to the integration of the arts and academics for all students. The performing and visual arts programs continue to build the reputation of the school through art shows in nearby communities, and performances at recitals, sporting events, festivals, parades and local schools.

The families of Snow Pond Arts Academy students are active in their support of the school, community and students. With its new parent/teacher organization, the school has hosted holiday events and spring fairs. Parents have overseen graduation events and prom. The school's students come from a region the size of Rhode Island, demonstrating the value of the program.

Section 13: Commendations and Concerns

Commendations

- After a challenging first year, Snow Pond Arts Academy successfully completed its second year.
- Strong leadership
- Engaged governing board

Concerns

- Attendance/Chronic absenteeism
- Student academic growth