

Maine Charter School Commission

September, 2016

On May 4 and June 16, 2016, announced on-site visits were made to Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (FSAS) public charter school. The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) review team of 3 members was accompanied by the MCSC Executive Director and the MCSC Director of Program Management. 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	Shelley Reed
Commission	Jana Lapoint
Commission	Nichi Farnham
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post

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	Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences
Address	25 Shaker Road Gray, ME 04039

Executive Director	Jacinda Cotton-Castro
Special Education Director	Ellen DeLuca
Board Chair	Alison Moser

Year Opened	School year 2013-2014
Years in Operation	3
Number of Sending Districts	14
Grades Served	Pre K-4
Number of Students	101 (October 1, 2015 "count day")
Teacher – Student Ratio	1:8

Mission	To unfold the potential of children, in a respectful, loving culture through authentic and meaningful experiences that sustain a sense of wonder, a love of learning and embrace the interconnectedness of all things.
Vision	To provide for the foundational needs of growing children in a community where children, teachers, and families learn together in a nurturing environment.

Section 2: Indicator Summary Table

Indicator	Meets Contract Agreement	Partially meets	Does not meet
Student Academic Proficiency		X¹	
Student Academic Growth	X		
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups ²			
Student Attendance			X³
Recurrent Enrollment from Year to Year	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		

¹ FSAS met literacy targets as measured by the Work Sampling System in 5 out of 6 grade levels, and in math in 4 out of 6 grade levels.

² 2015-16 subgroups were too small to report or to be considered a large enough sample for reliable data

³ During the 2015-16 school year FSAS's Average Daily Attendance Rate was 93%, putting them one percent below the target of 94%.

Section 3: Academics

Targets

- Student Academic Proficiency: State Assessments
 - The percent of Grade 3 students scoring proficient or above on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state's percentage of students scoring proficient or above.
 - The percent of Grade 4 students scoring proficient or above on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state's percentage of students scoring proficient or above.
 - The percent of Grade 5 students scoring proficient or above on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment will meet or exceed the state's percentage of students scoring proficient or above.
 - Grade 3 students scoring at or above proficient will be within 20% of the state average of students scoring proficient or above on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment
 - Grade 4 students scoring at or above proficient will be within 20% of the state average of students scoring proficient or above on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment
 - Grade 5 students scoring at or above proficient will be within 20% of the state average of students scoring proficient or above on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment

- Student Academic Proficiency: School Developed Assessments
 - 65% of Pre-K students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of Kindergarten students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 1st grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 2nd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 3rd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 4th grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 5th grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of Pre-K students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of Kindergarten students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 1st grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 2nd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 3rd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 4th grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - 65% of 5th grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.
 - Iowa Test of Basic Skills: Establish baseline using National percentile rank of average standard score for reading and math

- Student Academic Growth: Value added nationally normed individual and group assessment or equivalent for English and Math
 - 2015-2016 will serve as a baseline year for the Maine State Assessment System. Within 60 days of receiving the state results for 2015-2016, the school will generate growth goals for the following school year assuming the assessment will remain the same.
- Achievement gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups

Performance:

16 third grade students and 16 fourth grade students (100% of third and fourth graders) participated in Maine state testing in 2016. Scores are not currently available.

Work Sampling System (WSS), a Pearson Product (5th Edition) -A framework for portfolio-based assessment - The framework assists in identifying and recording what children are learning, what they are beginning to master, and what they still need to work on. The tables below show the Average of Proficient/Above Grade Level by grade (PRO/AGL). These figures include math, literacy, and science.

Language and Literacy as measured by the June administration of the WSS

Grade	Class Size	Percent Proficient or Exceeds Proficient	Target Percent	Met?
Pre-K	18	72%	65%	Yes
Kindergarten	17	88%	65%	Yes
First	17	94%	65%	Yes
Second	17	82%	65%	Yes
Third	17	35%	65%	No
Fourth	16	88%	65%	Yes

Math as measured by the June administration of the WSS

Grade	Class Size	Percent Proficient or Exceeds Proficient	Target Percent	Met?
Pre-K	18	72%	65%	Yes
Kindergarten	17	94%	65%	Yes
First	17	94%	65%	Yes
Second	17	71%	65%	Yes
Third	17	41%	65%	No
Fourth	16	56%	65%	No

FSAS met the targets for language and literacy in five out of six grades. The only grade that did not reach the target was 3rd grade. FSAS was not surprised with the third grade results and cited a large number of students with academic needs in the group as a reason for lower scores.

FSAS met the targets for math in four out of six grades. Both 3rd and 4th grades fell short of the 65% proficiency goal.

FSAS has identified math as a school-wide area for growth and improvement and last spring began to bolster professional development in math, with a focus on the Investigations curriculum and becoming familiar with the Common Core Standards in mathematics at each grade level. FSAS plans to continue this initiative in the 2016-2017 school year with ongoing professional development in the teaching of math.

In 2016 FSAS administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for the first time. FSAS established its baseline. Results are in the table to the right.

FSAS Subgroup numbers were too small to report this year for the target of reporting on achievement gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups.

Grade	Reading (National percentile rank of average standard score)	Math (National percentile rank of average standard score)
3	62	28
4	97	84

Section 4: Enrollment & Attendance

Targets:

- Student re-enrollment from one year to the next: 90% of students enrolled on state “count day” will still be enrolled on the last day of school.
- Continuous enrollment of students for multiple years: 90% of the student body who are eligible for re-enrollment at the end of one year will indicate their intent to return the following school year.
- Average Daily Attendance Rate
94% attendance rate

Performance:

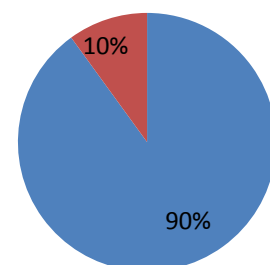
96% of students enrolled on state “count day” were still enrolled on the last day of school, exceeding the target of 90%.

90% of the student body who were eligible for re-enrollment at the end of the 2015-16 school year indicated their intent to return the following school year, meeting the 90% target.

During the 2015-16 school year FSAS’s Average Daily Attendance Rate was 93%, putting them one percent below the target of 94%.

2015-16 Re-Enrollment

■ returning ■ not returning



Section 5: Governance

Targets:

- Governance board meetings to be held monthly
- Bylaws and policies will be in place and regularly reviewed
- The Governing Board will maintain a minimum of seven members

Chair of the Board	Alison Moser
Board Member	Julie Ricardi
Board Member	Alison Spencer-Reed
Board Member	Sarah Hall
Board Member	Adam Gilman
Board Member	Debra Smith
Board Member	Kathleen Clements
Board Member	Zakk Maher

Performance:

The FSAS Governing Board met monthly during the 2015-16 school year, with additional meetings as needed. FSAS met the target for monthly board meetings.

The school has established bylaws and policies, and has met the target in this area.

The governing board had some turnover, but filled the vacancies during the school year. FSAS has met the target in this area, maintaining a seven member minimum.

With the growth of the school and increased size of the student body, the Board worked closely with the Executive Director to continue to build the school's teaching, administrative and financial

infrastructure; to maintain a financially sustainable organization in the short and longer term; and to formalize and implement a number of school policies and procedures.

Much of the work of the Board was conducted in its subcommittees that meet between Board meetings. The Board has four committees: Finance, Personnel, Education and Governance. These committees met to review and draft policies; to review and revise performance measures; to review personnel/staffing issues; and to review the school's bylaws.

Section 6: Administration

The position of Coordinator of Teaching and Learning was added at the start of the 2015-16 school year. Her leadership with the teaching staff aided in the continuation of FSAS's emergent curriculum philosophy.

The Executive Director's role became more clearly defined during the 2015-16, as the administrative team looked at building and re-organizing its organizational structure. FSAS is considering hiring a Business Manager and a Behavior Specialist.

Executive Director	Jacinda Cotton-Castro
Special Education Director	Ellen DeLuca
Coordinator of Teaching and Learning	Joanna Frankel

Section 7: School Climate

Targets:

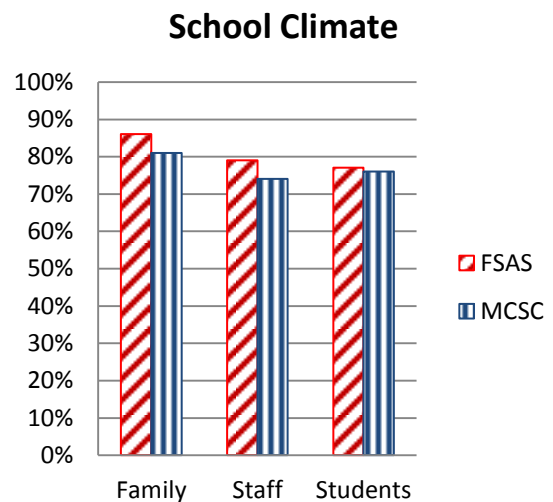
- The school will maintain the same state and federal reporting requirements as public schools
- Percentage of surveyed parents, staff and students who express satisfaction with school's social and academic climate.

Performance:

FSAS maintained the same state and federal reporting requirements as non-charter public schools, and met this target. Teachers record incidents of bullying or violence in a consistent way, using the FSAS Incident Report form that allows for monitoring of such behavior. They discuss appropriate standards of behavior and school rules with all students and involve school or community professionals as necessary.

FSAS uses a collaborative, restorative approach that focuses on prevention of upset and conflict. It uses a fair, compassionate, multi-pronged approach that focuses on responding when there is conflict of any kind. Staff models this mutual respect as well as appropriate conflict resolution skills. FSAS encourages teachers to embody peaceful programs against bullying and violence in their classroom curriculum in order to develop a positive educational approach to prevent and respond to such behavior.

FSAS families, staff, and students participated in the Panorama Education surveys in the spring of 2016. FSAS families responded 86% favorable in this area. FSAS Staff responded 79% favorable, and FSAS students responded 77% favorable. FSAS results were higher than the Maine Charter School Commission average in the area of school climate among all three groups.



Section 8: Parent and Community Engagement

Targets:

- To have families involved in the school community and engagement in their child's education for a total of 1000 hours in parent participation.
- To have 85% of parents in attendance at parent conferences, annually.

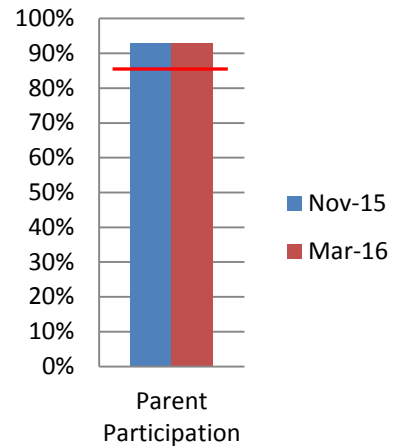
Performance:

FSAS met the target of having families involved in the school community and engagement in their child's education for a total of 1000 hours in parent participation, with over 1,400 volunteer hours logged before May 1, 2016.

Both the November and March parent/teacher conferences had 93% parent participation, exceeding the 85% target.

There are many opportunities for parent engagement at Fiddlehead School. The school's Executive Director holds a monthly "Coffee" where parents can chat, ask questions and listen to others. The Pre-K and Kindergarten classes hold Fiesta nights where kids put on a play or demonstration of something they have learned and the class families come together to eat and enjoy their child's work. The school also held a parent night in the fall as well as hosting a Stakeholders night in the spring.

Parent/Teacher Conferences



Section 9: Finances

Targets:

- School will produce monthly financial reports and evidence reviewed by governing board monthly through agenda item.
- 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:

FSAS produced monthly financial reports that were reviewed monthly by the governing board, meeting the target of monthly review.

If 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, meeting the target.

FSAS's operational budget is balanced and the school looks forward to having significant information and historical data for income and expenses at the end of year three.

FSAS worked to improve its financial processes during the 2015-16 school year. Improvement included:

- Fiscal Management Policies
- Capital Improvement Policy Developed
- Cash Reserve Fund Policy Developed
- Budgeting Process began in February
- Fiscal Review from the DOE Special Education TEAM

Section 10: Facilities & Maintenance, and Transportation

Targets:

- Facility will meet all applicable state expectations for public schools
- All students within catchment area have available bus transportation

The FSAS facility meets all applicable state expectations for public schools, meeting the target for facility. FSAS's physical space continues to evolve and is now in its final multi-phase renovation, which will include the transformation and addition of three classrooms.

All students within catchment area have available bus transportation, meeting the target for transportation.

Section 11: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation

Mission
To create a safe, respectful, nurturing and active learning community where every child is given the opportunity to thrive academically, to be accepted, to celebrate accomplishments and to develop a lifetime love of learning.

Vision
To create a school where learning is built around each student so that they become engaged learners with relevant and challenging work.

FSAS provides for the foundational needs of growing children in a community where children, teachers, and families learn together in a nurturing environment. FSAS is a school that honors children's curiosities, interests and uniqueness, and facilitates progressive learning at the highest level.

Section 12: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

- The Governing Board subcommittees have met on a regular basis and have been instrumental in analyzing administrative infrastructure needs, revising By-laws, adopting policies and procedures, planning for financial stability, addressing weaknesses in Math, and accommodating professional development and collaboration of teachers in the school schedule.
- The Governing Board, in its action, has responded to the recommendations from MCSC in the Monitoring report of 2015-16.
- The School Leader makes herself accessible to students, parents, and staff.
- The PTO is engaged; as evidenced by its stakeholders gathering for parents, staff, and board members to work together to support development of children.

- The position of Coordinator of Teaching and Learning created by the Board last year has been met with positive enthusiasm from staff as it scaffolds teaching and learning and provides training on the work sampling system through weekly meetings. The Coordinator works to blend the Reggio Emilia philosophy with assessment and data.
- The teacher evaluation system using the Danielson method fosters positive peer observation, feedback and self-reflection.
- The Charter School establishes a school culture of strong teacher/student/parent relationships “where kids can be themselves” (quote from parent)

Recommendations

- The school should continue to stay focused on math needs, continuing early mathematical thinking, CBM at the start of the school year, and data driven adjustments.
- The school should pursue a gathering with other charter school teachers, as requested by the teacher focus group.
- The school should keep a close eye on its financials and build a stronger cash flow position through utilization of the Board’s newly established capital improvement account and a capital reserve fund.