

Maine Charter School Commission



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2017-2018

FSAS Annual Monitoring Report Approved 12-4-18

September 2018

On June 12th, an announced on-site visit was made to the Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences. The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) Review Team of 2 members was accompanied by the MCSC Executive Director, MCSC Director of Program Management, and 2 representatives from MDOE Special Services. The visiting team held interviews with school leadership, and the school's Governing Board. The team also reviewed data provided by the school. 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
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post
DOE Special Services	Roberta Lucas
DOE Special Services	Dan Hemdal

School's Mission	<i>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.</i>
School's Vision	<i>To provide for the foundational needs of growing children in a community where children, teachers, and families learn together in a nurturing environment.</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.

2018–2019 School Information

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

Governing Board

Board Chair	Adam Gilman
Board Vice Chair	Alyson Spencer Reed
Board Secretary	Penny Collins
Board Treasurer	Melanie Prinz
Board Member	Bill Doughty
Board Member	Vincent Micale
Board Member	Zoe Belle Lewin
Board Member	Carolyn Beem

Executive Director/CEO	Jacinda Cotton-Castro
Coordinator of Teaching & Learning	Joanna Frankel
Special Education Director	Lee Ann Arnold
Business Manager	Barb Landry

Year Opened	2013
Years in Operation	5
Number of Sending Districts	15
Grades Served	PreK – 5
Current Enrollment	133*
Students on Waiting List	27*

*As of October 1, 2017 certified enrollment date.

Section 1: Overview

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences uses a Reggio Emilia-inspired approach to learning. The fundamentals of the Reggio Approach outlined by Gandini (2008) guide and inform its approach.

The principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach guide teaching and learning at Fiddlehead:

- The image of the child
- Children's relationships and interactions within a system
- The role of families
- The role of space
- Teachers and children as partners in learning.

The practices of the Reggio Emilia Approach are as follows:

- The physical space encompasses both the indoors and outdoors.
- Extensive periods of time – for in depth investigations, thoughtful observations and reflections.
- A community of learners – children, teachers, and parents co-construct knowledge.
- Interactive materials – tools that support development, expression, problem solving and communicate thinking.
- Technology enhances children's real world experiences.

The curriculum:

- Teachers observe and document children's learning
- Curriculum grows out of children's interests and questions.
- At the same time, teachers guide learning to ensure that children are developing necessary knowledge and skills.
- Interdisciplinary, project-based learning is central – in the classroom, outdoors and in the community.
- Not a pre-set curriculum – but a process of inviting and sustaining learning.

Teachers document children's learning through notes, photographs and examples of children's work. This makes learning visible to children, parents and teachers, and informs next steps in curriculum. Older children participate in documentation of learning.

At the same time that teachers are documenting children's learning as a group, they are tuned into the growth of individual children. Each child has a portfolio organized around an assessment framework that describes key knowledge, skills and habits of mind. Each child's development is documented and reported to families twice a year through summaries and portfolios.

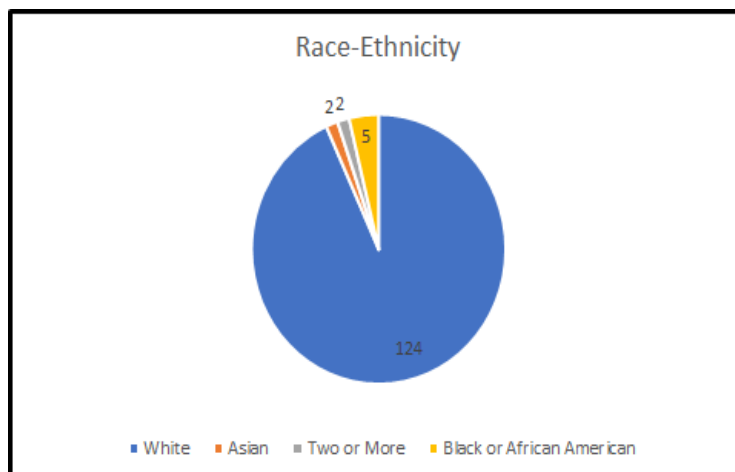
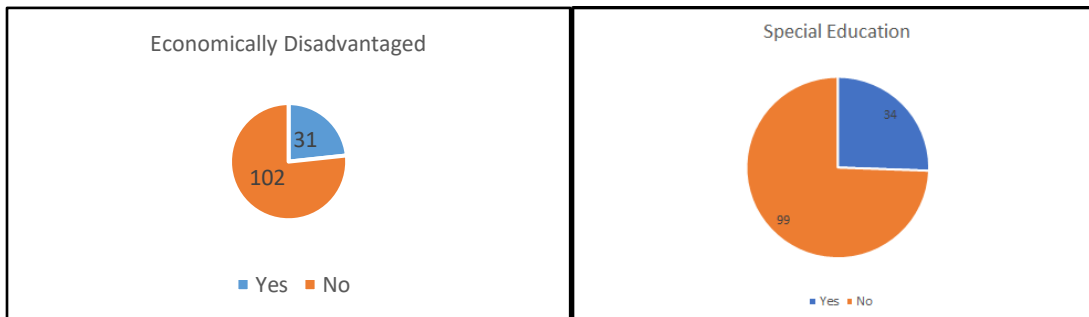
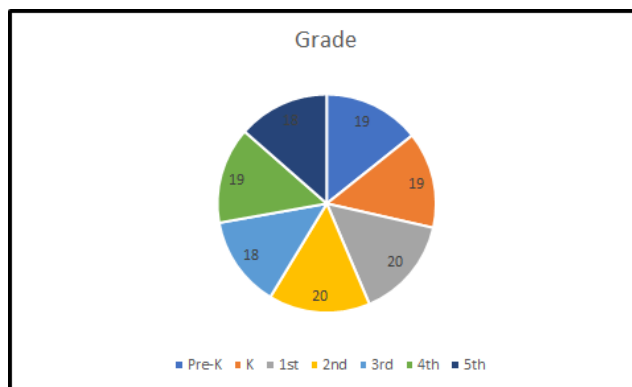
Fiddlehead uses assessment data to identify children who need additional support, and to inform improvement of the overall program.

While there are developmental "norms", each child develops knowledge and skills on their own timetable. Children in multi-age classes shine in their own ways, learn from each other and progress on a continuum that is not tied to their chronological age.

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	NA		
Student Attendance			X
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		
School Social and Academic Climate	X		
Parent and Community Engagement	X		

Section 3: Demographics



Section 4: Academics

Student Academic Proficiency

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
State Assessments: The percent of Grade 3, 4 and 5 students scoring proficient or above on the ELA portion of the Maine State Assessment	To meet or exceed the state's percentage of students scoring proficient or above	Grade 3 – above state Grade 4 – below state Grade 5 – not reportable	Partially met
State Assessments: Grade 3, 4 and 5 students scoring at or above proficient on the math portion of the Maine State Assessment	To be within 20% of the state average of students scoring proficient or above	Grade 3 – within 20% Grade 4 – not reportable Grade 5 – not reportable	Met
School Developed Assessments: Percent of students in each grade level meeting or exceeding proficiency in language and literacy as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System.	65% of students in each grade level will meet or exceed proficiency	The 65% proficiency target was met in all but one grade level.	Partially met
School Developed Assessments: Percent of students in each grade level meeting or exceeding proficiency in math as measured by the June administration of the Work Sampling System	65% of students in each grade level will meet or exceed proficiency	The 65% proficiency target was met in all but two grade levels.	Partially met

Discussion

Fiddlehead School has reportable ELA scores in 2 out of 3 grade levels and one out of 3 grade levels in math. Results for grade 5 ELA and grades 4 and 5 for math are not publicly reportable due to small n size and maintaining student confidentiality. The school and the Commission have access to the results for school level use and analysis. In the 3 reportable areas FSAS met its target in grade 3 ELA for being at or above the state average, and 3rd grade math for being within 20% of the state average. It did not meet the target for being at or above the state average in 4th grade ELA.

ELA

Grade	FSAS % proficient	Statewide % proficient	At or Above state?
3	68.75	44.98	Yes
4	33.33	51.3	No
5	*	52.1	*

Math

Grade	FSAS % proficient	Statewide % proficient	Within 20% of state?
3	37.5	45.68	Yes
4	*	40.22	*
5	*	33.52	*

Work Sampling System - Proficiency in language and literacy ranged by grade level from 55.56% to 89.47% and proficiency in math ranged by grade level from 58.83% to 89.47%. The 65% proficiency target was met in all but one grade level for literacy, and all but two grade levels for math.

Grade level	Proficiency Target	FSAS Literacy Proficiency	Target met?	FSAS Math Proficiency	Target met?
Prek	65%	89.5%	Yes	89.5%	Yes
K	65%	84.2%	Yes	84.2%	Yes
1	65%	65%	Yes	65%	Yes
2	65%	70%	Yes	70%	Yes
3	65%	70.6%	Yes	70.6%	Yes
4	65%	55.6%	No	61.1%	No
5	65%	82.4%	Yes	58.8%	No

Student Academic Growth

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Percent of students meeting or exceeding expected growth on Value added nationally normed individual and group assessment or equivalent for English (ITBS)	65% of students meeting or exceeding expected growth	4 th grade= 56% 5 th grade= 53%	Did not meet
Percent of students meeting or exceeding expected growth on Value added nationally normed individual and group assessment or equivalent for Math (ITBS)	65% of students meeting or exceeding expected growth	4 th grade= 71% 5 th grade= 71%	Met

Discussion

The school reports it is very pleased with the growth students made in math as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The school held multiple professional development sessions for math during the 2017-18 school year. It will be implementing a new K-5 math curriculum in the fall of 2018 and believes this will contribute to increased student growth.

FSAS students' reading growth has remained steady. The school implemented its new RTI process during the 2017-18 school year and saw growth which the school attributed to that process. Fiddlehead School will be using NWEA next year, to replace ITBS, and student data will be available immediately, which the school believes will help teachers support individual students with literacy goals.

Grade level	Target Percentage meeting expected growth	FSAS percentage meeting expected reading growth	Reading Target met?	FSAS percentage meeting expected math growth	Target met?
4	65%	56%	No	71%	Yes
5	65%	53%	No	71%	Yes

Achievement Gaps in Proficiency and Growth Between Major Student Subgroups

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Achievement gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups	Not reportable	Not reportable	N/A

Discussion

The school's "N size" is too small to report sub groups or to draw meaningful conclusions. However, the school is looking at this data for potential trends. At this time, it has not identified major gaps in growth as measured by ITBS between subgroups (by gender, identified special ed, or qualification for FRL). MEA results will be similarly analyzed when the results are available.

Section 5: Attendance and Enrollment

Student Attendance

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Average Daily Attendance Rate	94%	92%	Did not meet

Discussion

Fiddlehead school did not meet its 94% attendance target (ADA=92%). The school reported a few families had students who were chronically absent. This summer the school plans to review its internal procedures to make sure there is communication with families to develop a plan to come to school, should the need arise.

Enrollment from Year to Year Enrollment

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Percent of students enrolled on state “count day” will still be enrolled on the last day of school.	90%	95.4%	Met
Continuous enrollment of students for multiple years: percent of the student body eligible for re-enrollment at the end of one year indicating intent to return the following school year.	90%	94%	Met

Discussion

The percentage of same students enrolled on state “count day” who were still enrolled on the last day of school was 95.4%. Fiddlehead met the 90% enrollment target.

At the end of the 2017-18 school year 94% of students indicated their intent to return, a 94% re-enrollment rate which met the target of 90%.

Section 6: Finances

Financial Performance and Sustainability

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Financial reports and evidence reviewed by governing board through agenda item.	Monthly	Reports received	Met
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	As necessary	Monthly financials did not vary by more than 5% during the 2017-18 school year	Met

Discussion

The governing board met regularly and reviewed financial reports. During the 17-18 school year financials did not vary by more than 5%, so there was no need for special considerations. The school reported having finished the year with a positive balance.

Section 7: Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
Governance board meetings	To be held monthly	Monthly meetings	Met
Bylaws and policies	To be in place and regularly reviewed	Bylaws revised	Met
Governing Board membership	To maintain a minimum of seven members	Currently 6 board members	Met

Discussion

The 6 member FSAS governing board met regularly. The board went through a revision of its bylaws in 2018. FSAS has active, well-established subcommittees: personnel, education, diversity, finance, and governance.

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
Facility will meet all applicable state expectations for public schools	To meet all state requirements	Reports submitted to MDOE	Met

Discussion

Fiddlehead School submitted its School Facilities Inventory Report to MDOE.

The school reports it is at full capacity and feels it may be outgrowing its current space. The school is considering options to accommodate its students and programming.

Section 9: School Climate

School Social and Academic Climate

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
The school will maintain the same state and federal reporting requirements as public schools	100%	Reported to MDOE	Met
Percentage of surveyed parents, staff and students who express satisfaction with school's social and academic climate	Reporting of parents, staff, and students	Percent favorable Students -73% Families – 81% Teachers – 74% Staff – 81%	Met

Discussion

The school reported incidents of bullying, harassment, and other abusive practices as required by law.

According to the spring 2018 Panorama Education Surveys the percent favorable in each stakeholder group was as follows: Students -73%, Families – 81%, Teachers – 74%, Staff – 81%. When compared to similar schools (elementary schools with 0-30% free/reduced lunch) students were around the 80th percentile, families were around the 60th percentile, teachers were around the 60th percentile, and staff were around the 80th percentile.

Section 10: Parent and Community Engagement

Parent and Community Engagement

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially Met
To have families involved in the school community and engagement in their child's education	1000 hours in parent participation	2012 volunteer hours	Met
Percent of parents in attendance at parent conferences, annually.	85%	96%	Met

Discussion

Fiddlehead School continues to have strong parent attendance at conferences and other school events. 96% of parents attended conferences and 2012 volunteer hours were recorded.

Section 11: Administration

Fiddlehead School continues to operate with an Executive Director, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning, Business Manager, and Special Education Director as its administrative team.

Next year FSAS plans to add a School Counselor & an Integrated Art & Science teacher. The School Counselor will work with staff and students to help the growth of the whole child and will have the flexibility to engage with school staff, as well as with individual students and small groups. The Integrated Art & Science Teacher will have special skills in the atelier (art studio) and the areas of environmental science and ecology and will work with all classes/classroom teachers to integrate and facilitate learning in the visual arts and sciences. The school will also expand the number of hours for a Math specialist to support both staff and students.

FSAS continues to use its Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PEPG) process for assessment and evaluation. Educators may, but will not be required to, pursue traditional certification. FSAS reports that its staff meets the needs of its program and as the school continues to grow and develop FSAS continues to assess its needs to best support students.

Section 12: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation

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

During the 17-18 school year Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences worked on clarifying what FSAS strives for, what FSAS believes, what the FSAS approach looks like, and what FSAS graduates can do. The school developed the following which will serve to guide the school.

What We Strive For

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences is committed to the growth and development of the whole child- socially, emotionally, physically, academically, intellectually, and artistically. The goal of a Fiddlehead education is for students to build a toolbox of habits, skills, and wonderings to drive a lifelong love of learning. We aim to empower learners to seek answers to their own questions and to develop the means necessary for this endeavor.

What We Believe

At Fiddlehead, seven core educational beliefs drive our practices throughout the grades:

- We believe children are capable, competent, and innately curious. They are the co-constructors of their own learning. Our school maintains a deep respect for children and childhood.*
- We believe the foundation of learning lies in habits of mind such as asking questions, looking closely, making reasonable predictions, and engaging in dialogue. Students are encouraged to express their thought processes orally and in writing. In addition, students are taught executive functioning skills such as planning, organization, and self-control.*
- We believe in teachers as facilitators of learning, closely observing children, assessing understanding through a variety of approaches, and using this knowledge to help students extend their thinking. We offer students a variety of materials and methods to express themselves and their understandings, guiding learning through diverse pathways.*
- We believe in learning as a social endeavor, taking place in the cultural context of the child, family, school, and broader community. To this end, we see school and family as partners in a child's education.*
- We believe that social and emotional development are important cornerstones of education. Our students learn to respect diversity in all its forms, problem solve social conflicts, and be advocates for themselves and others.*
- We believe in connecting students to the larger world outside the school walls through relationships with community resources and the natural environment. We help students cultivate a sense of place and an understanding of, and appreciation for, the interconnectedness of the world in which they live.*
- We believe in the importance of documenting student work and experiences in order to make learning visible to students, families, and our school community.*

Section 13: Commendations and Concerns

Commendations

- Active board subcommittees
- Smooth transition to new board chair
- Dedication to mission is evident in the hiring of an integrative arts and science teacher
- Plan to increase hours of math specialist support
- Increased arts experiences
- Clear Education Board Committee Goals
- Diversity Committee is addressing tough issues
- School has invoked many strategies to improve math achievement and growth such as professional development, RTI, instructional time moved up and implementation of a new curriculum
- School has identified attendance issues such as distance, family issues, previous school attendance and are formulating policies
- Special Ed moving from reactive to proactive with PBIS
- Working on increasing teacher benefits to be competitive with district schools
- Getting clear on branding message directed to enrolling families
- Addition of school counselor

Concerns

- Low attendance rate/chronic absenteeism
- Ongoing need to plan for space utilization
- Student Academic Growth