

Maine Charter School Commission



ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2017-2018

HCA Annual Monitoring Report Approved 12-4-18

September 2018

On June 20th an announced on-site visit was made to Harpswell Coastal 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. 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	Laurie Pendleton
Commission	John Bird
Commission	Shelley Reed
MCSC Executive Director	Bob Kautz
MCSC Director of Program Management	Gina Post

School’s Mission	<i>To offer a rigorous, personalized, project-based education to mid-coast Maine students in grades 6-12.</i>
School’s Vision	<i>To use Maine’s shorelines, working waterfronts, forests, and farms as classrooms. To partner with local organizations and businesses, entrepreneurs, and community members who are committed to our goal of preparing caring, creative, resilient citizen-scholars who will flourish in a rapidly changing economy.</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	Harpwell Coastal Academy
Address	

Governing Board

Board President	Sally Mackenzie
Board Vice President	Ed Harris
Board Treasurer	Dave Jean
Board Secretary	Cynthia Shelmerdine
Board Member	Sue Priest
Board Member	Alan Yuods nukis
Board Member	Nancy Andersen

Executive Director	Carrie Branson
Division 1 Principal	Scott Barksdale
Division 2 Principal	Maria Russell
Director of Teaching and Learning	Micah Depper
Special Education Director	Carrie Campbell
Business & Finance Director	Andrew Smaha

Year Opened	2013
Years in Operation	5
Number of Sending Districts	13
Grades Served	6 - 12
Current Enrollment	195*
Students on Waiting List	0*

*As of October 1, 2017 certified enrollment date.

Section 1: Overview

Harpswell Coastal Academy (HCA) is a public charter school established in 2013 offering rigorous, personalized, project-based education to Maine students in grades 6-12. Originally initiated by a group of Harpswell citizens concerned that many of the town's young people were increasingly disengaged from school, HCA has grown to include a diverse group of mid-coast educators, business leaders, and community partners committed to preparing students to live and work in the rapidly changing coastal economy. Harpswell and the surrounding towns consist of a varied population of business and professional, military, blue collar, and fishing families.

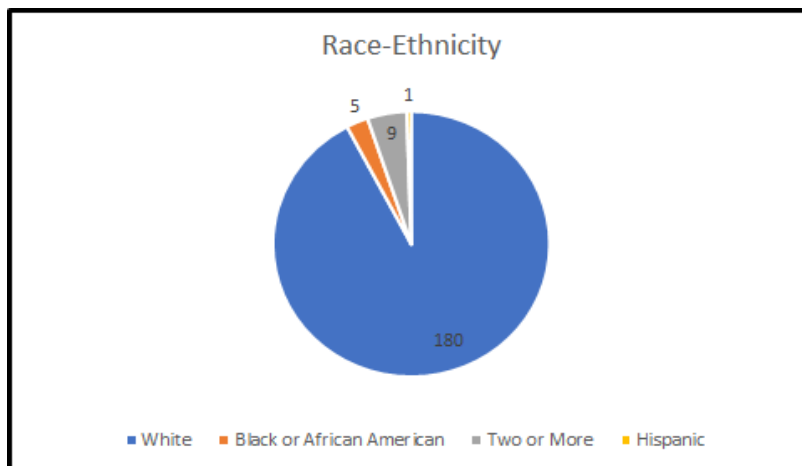
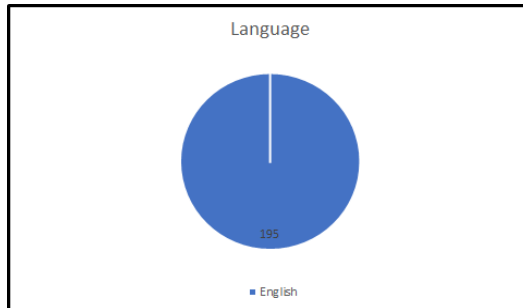
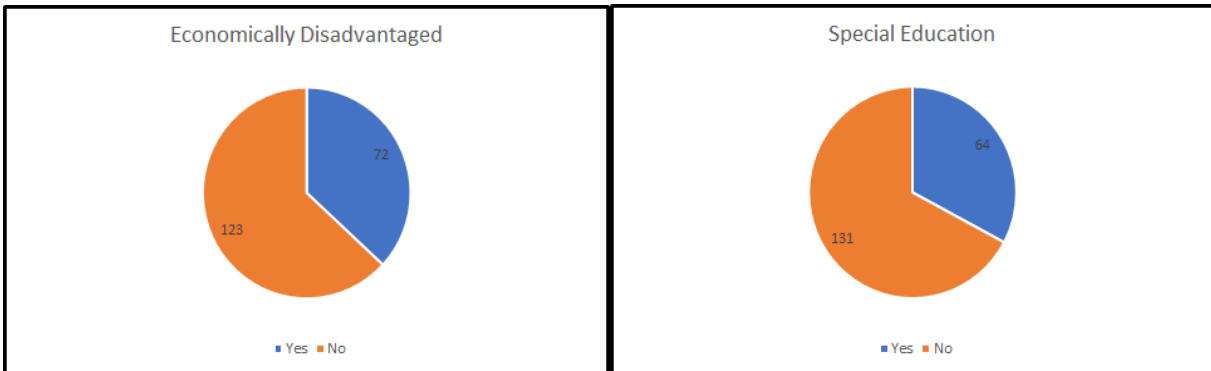
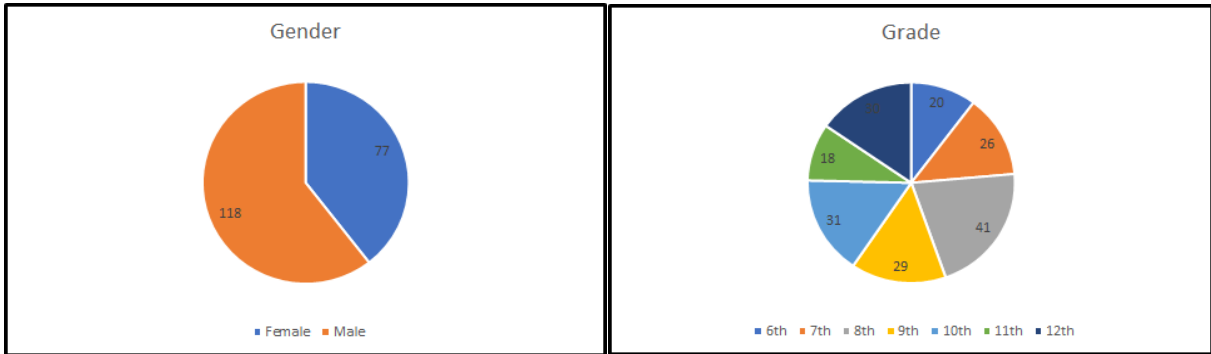
HCA students currently come from mid-coast Maine towns including Harpswell, Brunswick, Bowdoinham, Topsham, Freeport, and Bath. Currently, HCA enrolls 195 students and enrollment is based on a lottery. HCA serves 36.9% Free or Reduced Lunch students and 32.8% Special Education students.

HCA's curriculum and pedagogy is intended to showcase best practices developed over the past 20 years by organizations such as the Coalition of Essential Schools and Expeditionary Learning: standards-based teaching and learning; relevant, place-based curriculum that incorporates fieldwork and internships; and deliberate structures for building students' character and holding them accountable. HCA's organizational structure supports students in achieving high standards in a variety of ways including a longer school day, summer programs, and community mentors for each student. The curriculum at HCA is a college-preparatory and meets the same Common Core standards in Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Health and Physical Education and Fine Arts, as do all Maine public middle and high schools. However, HCA offers two tenets to its approach of the curriculum that differentiates its school from others. One central tenet of the HCA approach is that students move on when they are ready, not when they reach a certain birthday. A second tenet is that students benefit from teachers who know them well over a longer period of time and are much more accountable for ensuring that each student is able to progress over that time.

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



Section 4: Academics

Student Academic Proficiency

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
State Assessments in Reading & Math	Difference between the percentage of HCA students scoring proficient (or exceeds) on the MEA and the percentage of all Maine students scoring proficient (or exceeds) in the state: Grade 6=3, Grade 7=3, Grade 8=3, HS= 3	Out of 4 classes in ELA and 4 in math, 5 had enough student participation for reportable data. The target was not met in those 5 areas. See below for details.	Did not meet
School Selected Assessment	Percent of students in grades 6-12 scoring in the average to above average RIT band in reading on the NWEA:	Grade 6 = 55% Grade 7 = 70% Grade 8 = 55% Grade 9 = 55% Grade 10 = 75% Grade 11 = 55%	met
School Selected Assessment	Percent of students in grades 6-12 scoring in the average to above average RIT band in math on the NWEA:	Grade 6 = 55% Grade 7 = 55% Grade 8 = 55% Grade 9 = 50% Grade 10 = 45% Grade 11 = 50% Grade 12 = 55%.	met
School Designed Assessment	Division 1: 6th grade: 99% students will approach proficiency (score 2 or higher) in 50% of Division 1 measurement categories. 7th grade: 80% students will approach proficiency in 90% of Division 1 measurement categories. 8th grade: 85% students will approach proficiency in 100% of Division 1 measurement categories.	NA – See discussion below	NA
School Designed Assessment	Division 2: 9th grade: 85% students will approach proficiency in 75% of Division 2	NA – See discussion below	NA

	measurement categories. 10th grade: 95% students will approach proficiency in 75% of Division 2 measurement categories. 11th grade: 85% students will approach proficiency in 80% of Division 2 measurement categories. 12th grade: 85% students will approach proficiency in 80% of Division 2 measurement categories.		
School Designed Assessment	98% of students will submit three satisfactory portfolio pieces.	Approximately 85%	Did not meet

Discussion

Out of 8 classes (4 classes in ELA and 4 in math), 5 had enough student participation for reportable data. The targets were not met in those 5 areas. Cells with an asterisk * are not reportable due to a small n size and maintaining student confidentiality.

ELA

Grade	HCA % proficient	State % proficient	Difference
6	28.57	46.51	-17.94
7	25	47.18	-22.17
8	25	52.63	-27.63
11	*	57.05	*

Math

Grade	HCA % proficient	State % proficient	Difference
6	23.81	31.4	7.59
7	25	35.44	10.44
8	*	38.65	*
11	*	34.53	*

The school reports that NWEA data vary between grade levels and cohorts. On the NWEA HCA hit all but one of its internal benchmarks with regard to reading. The school reports it will continue to implement RTI and reading strategy instruction. In math HCA reached benchmarks for four out of six grades. HCA's math faculty continue to refine math instruction, with a focus on remediating skills for students beginning middle school well below grade level.

During the renewal process HCA described how the indicators for the school designed assessment were unattainable. The school developed new indicators with its new contract and will begin measuring with the new indicators for school year 2018-19.

Because of student transfers (in and out of HCA) during the year, and chronic absenteeism/truancy the 98% target for submitting 3 satisfactory portfolio pieces was not met. However, of students who attended HCA for the full school year and attended school regularly, 98% submitted 3 satisfactory portfolio pieces.

Student Academic Growth

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Establish baseline for growth on State Assessment	Report Data	Data reported – see academic proficiency	Met

Discussion

Harpswell Coastal Academy students completed state testing at grade 6-8 and 11. Data will be used to establish a baseline and set future targets.

Achievement Gaps in Proficiency and Growth Between Major Student Subgroups

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Establish baseline for gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups on Maine State Assessment	Report Data	Data are non reportable due to small n size and maintaining student confidentiality.	Met

Discussion

Maine State assessment data were collected to establish baseline data among various student subgroups. The results are available to the school and the Commission, but are not publicly reportable due to small n size and maintaining student confidentiality.

Section 5: Attendance and Enrollment

Student Attendance

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Attendance	95% Average Daily Attendance for Division 1, 92% Average Daily Attendance for Division 2	Div 1 89% Div 2/3 87%	Did not meet
Attendance	In each school year the number of unexcused absences will decrease from the fall to the spring trimester	Decrease at Div 1 Increase at Div 2	Partially met

Discussion

HCA reported a number of reasons for absences including: student’s date of withdrawal from school not aligning with the last day attended; significant health and/or mental issues; school related anxiety; transportation issues; family struggles; criminal activity; and general school disengagement, especially at Divisions 2 and 3. The school has truancy policies in place to address issues, and guidance and social work support to address other attendance concerns. The school reports it plans to continue to establish practices to limit absenteeism. The Leadership Team has begun research into intervention strategies to develop a new set of procedures for the 2018-19 school year.

Enrollment

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
	90% of students enrolled on state “student count day” will still be enrolled on the last day of school	88% still enrolled	Did not meet
	80% of students enrolled on the last day of school indicate intent to return the following year.	94% re-enrolled	Met

Discussion

88% of HCA students who were enrolled on the October 1, 2017 “state count day” remained enrolled until the last day of school. 94% of eligible students enrolled on the last day of school planned to return for the 2018-19 school year. During the school year students who un-enrolled from the school cited the following reasons: moving out of state/ out of the area (8 students); a return to homeschooling (4 students) a desire for a more traditional school environment (6 students); discontinuation of schooling (4 students), and dissatisfaction with the culture of the school (1).

Post-Secondary Readiness

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Federal Graduation 4 year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)	Report data	67%	Met
Graduation Rate	90%	67% of seniors enrolled for the 17-18 school year graduated in 2018	Did not meet
Percentage of students completing dual enrollment courses	Establish Baseline	12 students successfully completed SMCC courses. > 50% of 12 th grade class	Met
Percentage of students scoring at or above state average on SAT	Report data	Not publicly reportable due to small 'n' size and maintaining student confidentiality	
Enrollment in postsecondary institutions	Report data	11 of 23 graduating students plan to enroll in post secondary institutions	Met
Outcomes for students not attending postsecondary institutions	Report data	Several students have secured employment for after graduation. Others will be seeking employment. A few students have a gap year planned.	Met

Discussion

HCA's 2018 Federal Graduation 4 year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) was 67%. 8 students constitute the 33% who did not graduate with their anticipated 4-year cohort. Of those, 5 have either completed their graduation requirements (after the end of last year) or are attending HCA for a fifth year now, and anticipate graduating in the spring of 2019. The school did not make the 90% target.

More than 50% of HCA's seniors participated in dual enrollment courses. 48% of HCA seniors plan to attend post secondary institutions. Several students had secured employment for after graduation before the end of the school year. Others will be seek employment. A few students have a gap year planned.

Section 6: Finances

Financial Performance and Sustainability

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Governance Board reviews budget and makes appropriate adjustments to ensure school remains financially healthy.	Governance Board and/or Finance Committee review budget on a quarterly basis at a minimum. Quarterly financial reports and end of year audit are available to authorizer.	The Board Finance Committee met monthly	Met
School conducts an external audit	The end of year audit is made available to authorizer.	The school completed an audit in the fall for FY17.	Met

Discussion

The Board Finance Committee met monthly, with additional meetings as necessary, to review reports and provide oversight to the Finance Director and Executive Director.

HCA had a financial audit completed for FY 2017. The audit was submitted to Maine Department of Education and the Maine Charter School Commission as required.

Section 7: Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Governance Board Performance and Stewardship

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Governance Board operates in a transparent, responsible, and legally compliant manner	Governance Board holds public meetings with posted agendas and minutes.	The HCA Board holds bi-monthly meetings.	Met
Governance Board provides oversight of school leadership team	Board conducts an annual evaluation of school leadership	Evaluation completed	Met

Discussion

HCA's governing board meets bi-monthly. Agendas and minutes are posted on the school website. Reminders of the meetings are included in family newsletters.

HCA's governing board members have experience in education, finance, accounting, leadership training, special education, alternative education, entrepreneurship, non-profit management, post-secondary education, and social services.

The governing board conducted an evaluation of its director for the 2017-18 school year.

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
School facilities meet educational and health and safety standards.	Board certifies that the facilities meet educational, health & safety standards	Certified in report	Met
Site Development	Report progress	Continuation of planned maintenance	Met
Food Service: School reports on costs and student participation	Report data	15% of students use breakfast program 50% of students use lunch program	Met
Transportation: School reports on costs and student participation	Report data	75% of students use school transportation	Met

Discussion

HCA certified in its reports that its facilities meet educational, health & safety standards. The school has planned maintenance projects such as kitchen updates, heating system upgrades, and farm updates at both the Harpswell and Brunswick campuses.

Students at HCA have the opportunity to have school breakfast and school lunch. HCA’s reports show 15% of students use the breakfast program and 50% of students use the lunch program.

HCA provides transportation to students within its catchment area. Approximately 75% of students use school provided transportation.

HCA has a .5 time facilities coordinator, on-site support of a supervising school nurse, and a .5 time custodian, who work to maintain the health and safety of students in HCA’s facility.

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 practices	Decrease from previous year	Decreased from 22 incidents to 17 incidents	Met
Student (HOWLs) Habits of Work and Learning	1. HOWLs are reported to students & families 3 times yearly 2. HOWLs improve or reach proficiency from fall to spring each year for each Division	1. HOWLs were reported at student led conferences twice during the year and were reported again at the end of the school year. 2. HOWLs progress and proficiency data not reported.	Partially met
School Climate Survey	80% of students report via school climate survey: active participation in Restorative Justice and Community Meeting	85% of students participated in Restorative Justice model 100% participated in Community Meeting.	Met
School Climate Survey	Annual improvement in targeted areas on student and family climate survey	In the targeted scale, Grit, there was a slight decrease in the percent favorable responses	Did not meet

Discussion

As required by law, HCA reports instances of bullying, harassment, or other abusive practices. HCA had a decrease in incidents (from 22 to 17) from the 2016-17 school year to the 2017-18 school year. The school reports the decline is the result of continued strengthening of restorative practices, increased professional development with faculty about behavioral interventions, and increased guidance and social work capacity.

Student (HOWLs) Habits of Work and Learning were reported at student led conferences twice during the year and were reported again at the end of the school year. HCA believes that HOWLs are an extremely important part of its program. The school reports HOWLs assessments are frequently used as a condition to earn privileges as well as to participate in some workshops, and other learning opportunities. Increased assessment of HOWLs at Division 2/3 is planned for the 2018-19 school year.

According to HCA's Panorama Surveys, 85% of students participated in the Restorative Justice Model and 100% participated in the Community Meetings.

HCA created a goal in the area of Grit for its students after reviewing its 2017 survey data. HCA is aiming for at least 68% favorable responses in this area. This is an ongoing multi-year initiative. Some of the steps HCA took to improve Grit during the 2017-18 school year were were:

- working within crew groups to focus students on understanding their own personal learning styles and build learning strategies banks that match their styles;
- working with students to increase positive self talk, encouraging a focus on appreciative inquiry and gratitude;
- building resiliency with students in regard to revising work and attempting to meet standards for a second or third time as necessary.

Section 10: Parent and Community Engagement

Parent and Community Engagement

Measure	Target	Results	Met/Did Not Meet/Partially met
Student participation in activities provided by Community Partnerships	Each student participates in at least one Workshop, club or internship during the year	100% participation	Met
Parent Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent checks student portal at least once every other week. 2. Parent opens weekly newsletter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data not reported 2. 40%-65% newsletter opening rate 	Partially met
Parent participation in their children's education and operation of school: Participation in Student Led Conferences	Division 1: 90% of parents attend at least one (SLC) per year Division 2: 60% of parents attend at least one SLC per year	91% at Division 1 75% at Division 2	Met
Celebration of Learning & Passages	Each student presents to the larger school community twice each year at minimum.	95% of students participated in 2 presentations	Met

Discussion

100% of students participated in at least one activity, such as a workshop, club, or internship, with a community partner.

Parent use of the student portal was not reported. 40%-65% of HCA's newsletter recipients opened the newsletter in their web browser.

91% of Division 1 parents attended at least one Student Led Conference. 75% of Division 2 parents attended at least one SLC.

95% of students participated in 2 presentations to the larger school community twice during the school year.

Section 11: Administration

HCA's fifth year was marked by a new Leadership Team taking the school from its start-up phase to a period of growth and establishment. After receiving approval for another 5-year charter, the school focused on bringing consistency to its project-based learning long-term Investigations, schedules at both campuses, and Division 3 expectations.

Section 12: Evidence of Mission and Vision Implementation

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

HCA had many examples of how it met its mission and vision during the 2017-18 school year including:

- ★ Mapping content instruction into one of three primary settings:
 - Investigations (long-term PBL coursework)
 - Workshops (shorter term, flexibly grouped classes to address specific standards)
 - Electives (interest based content that often encompasses health, wellness and/or art standards);
- ★ Further development of the Division 1 House structure which provides a year-long orientation to HCA for the 6th graders in the Curtis house advisory group and two-person teaching teams with high accountability to each other for the remaining Division 1 students;
- ★ Improved math curriculum planning that now provides a clear 6-12 progression;
- ★ Improved culture around implementation of assessment;
- ★ Improved outcomes in NWEA Math scores for Divisions 2 & 3;
- ★ Development of Division 3 program including:
 - setting senior capstone expectations
 - increasing the number of students with dual enrollment at SMCC
 - supporting students in post-secondary planning
- ★ Establishment of the Division 2/3 Bike Repair Shop;
- ★ Further development of the Division 1 farm, with the addition of:
 - a hoop house
 - improved composting system
 - Chickens
 - New garden beds
- ★ Continued development of community partnerships and student internship program
- ★ Use of assessment data to support flexible grouping of students and implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) program
- ★ Increased opportunities for Outdoor Education programs during the summer and throughout the school year

Section 13: Commendations and Concerns

Commendations

- Dedication to project-based learning
- Meeting students needs with standards-based education

Concerns

- Chronic absenteeism
- Low participation in MEA at some grade levels
- Student Academic Proficiency