

Monitoring Report

Harpswell Coastal Academy

August, 2014

1. Introduction

The Harpswell Coastal Academy (HCA) is one of the three public charter school authorized to begin its first year as a charter school in September 2013. HCA offers personalized project based education, a first of its kind for Mid-Coast Maine students in grades 6-12.

HCA is located on Ash Point Rd. Harpswell, Maine. Its initial enrollment of 57 students in grades 6 and 9 is gathered from 11 different communities from Yarmouth to Woolwich and Wiscasset. 33 students are in 6th grade with 24 in the 9th grade. Approximately 26% of the students attending currently have IEP's.

HCA implements a standards-based teaching and learning program - 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 - a longer school day, Saturday "intensives," and community mentors for each student. The curriculum and the instructional program are both imbedded in a hands-on learning approach, utilizing an agricultural and natural science oriented environment. Along with the hands-on, individualized instruction, the school emphasizes its Restorative Justice program, designed to help students develop into self-directed learners responsible for their actions.

2. Process for Monitoring the Public Charter School

The Maine Charter School Commission established a visiting review team accompanied by the MCSC Executive Director, and the Department of Education Special Education Personnel. The Commission team conducted two announced on-site visits during the 2013-2014 school year. The dates of the visits were November 8, 2013 and June 5, 2014.

The review team held interviews with school leadership, staff, students, parents and community, and governing board. They also review available data provided by the school. Documents provided by the school are available from the Maine Charter School Commission office. Additional data was collected from the Maine Department of Education website.

Information gathered from documents, interviews, and on-site observation was used to determine the extent to which the school has met their contracted performance targets.

Section 3: Charter Commission Annual Report on Harpswell Coastal Academy's Performance Indicators August 2014

"Outcome" is designated by color.

Indicator and Measure	2013-2014 Targets	Documented Results Reported	Notes from Monitoring Visits	Outcome
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 1: Proficiency on State Assessments in reading.</i>	<i>Establish Baseline</i>	School did not participate in state assessment program so baseline will be established in year 2.	On May 7, 2014, the school was issued a Notice of Material Non-Compliance with the contract based on the school's lack of participation in the State Assessment system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 2: Proficiency on State Assessments in math.</i>	<i>Establish Baseline</i>	School did not participate in state assessment program so baseline will be established in year 2.	<p>The school responded with a plan to administer an alternative form of assessment (the NWEA) to provide data to establish a baseline and ongoing progress.</p> <p>School administration is well aware of the importance of participation in the Maine State Assessment system and is prepared to assess their students beginning in the 2014-15 school year.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 3: Proficiency on school selected standardized test in reading.</i>	<i>Establish baseline using NWEA in reading</i>	74.5% of students scored in the Average & Above Average RIT bands on the spring, 2014 assessment of reading.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 4: Proficiency on school selected standardized test in math.</i>	<i>Establish baseline using NWEA in math</i>	62 % of students scored in the Average & Above Average RIT bands on the spring, 2014 assessment of math.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 5: Proficiency on school designed assessment</i>	<i>Year One: Establish Baseline.</i>		School is tracking student performance using a proficiency-based assessment system through-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

<i>program measuring Maine Learning Results.</i>			out the 2013-2014 school year and is prepared to provide student achievement data beginning in year two.	
Student Academic Proficiency <i>Measure 6: Student Portfolio</i>	<i>95% of students will submit three satisfactory portfolio pieces.</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Academic Growth <i>Measure 1: Growth on State Assessment</i>	<i>Establish Baseline</i>	School did not participate in state assessment program so baseline will be established in year 2.		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Achievement Gaps <i>Measure 1: Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups on Maine State Assessment.</i>	<i>Establish Baseline</i>	School did not participate in state assessment program so baseline will be established in year 2.		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Attendance <i>Measure 1: Average Daily Attendance Rate</i>	<i>Division 1: Average Daily Attendance Rate = 95% Division 2: Average Daily Attendance Rate = 92%</i>	Division 1: Division 2:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Attendance <i>Measure 2: Reduce unexcused absences</i>	<i>In each school year, the number of unexcused absences will decrease from the fall to spring trimester.</i>		School will begin tracking this measure in the 2014-2015 school year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Enrollment <i>Measure 1: Maintaining student enrollment</i>	<i>80% of students enrolled on state "count day" will still be enrolled on last day of school.</i>	88% of students stayed through the 2013-2014 school year	7 Withdrew during the year of those 7, two moved out of the area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Student Enrollment <i>Measure 2: Student re-enrollment from one year to the next</i>	<i>80% of students enrolled on last day of school indicate intent to return the following school year.</i>	From data dated 6/2: 53 of 58 students returning (91%)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 1: Federal Graduation 4-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 2: Maine determined graduation rate</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

<i>as determined under Title 20-A MRSA, section 5031, subsection 1.</i>				
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 3: Percentage of students completing dual enrollment courses</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 4: Percentage of students scoring at or above state average on SAT.</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 5: Enrollment in post-secondary institutions</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Post Secondary Readiness <i>Measure 6: Outcomes for students not attending post-secondary institutions.</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Financial Performance and Sustainability <i>Measure 1: Governance board reviews budget and makes appropriate adjustments to ensure school remains financially healthy.</i>	<i>Governance board and/or financial committee review budget on a quarterly basis at a minimum.</i>	<p>From Board Minutes: Finance Committee Reports June 19, 2013 August 14, 2013 August 27, 2013 September 18, 2013 October 23, 2013 November 20, 2013 April 16, 2014</p> <p>Treasurer's Report December 18, 2013 January 15, 2014 February 26, 2014 March 19, 2014</p> <p>Report on 3-year budget July 17th, 2013: Budget Review</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Financial Performance and Sustainability <i>Measure 2: School conducts</i>	<i>Quarterly financial reports and end of year audit are available to authorizer.</i>		The school is hiring a bookkeeper for the 2014-2015 school year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

<i>an external audit.</i>				
<u>Governance Board Performance & Stewardship</u> <i>Measure 1: Governance Board operates in a transparent, responsible, and legally compliant manner.</i>	<i>Governance Board holds public meetings with posted agendas and minutes.</i>	<i>Agendas are available on Website</i>	Agendas are posted 48 hours before meeting on HCA website. Minutes are posted as soon as available. Board is planning retreat for August, 2014.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Governance Board Performance & Stewardship</u> <i>Measure 2: Governance Board provides oversight of school leadership team.</i>	<i>Board conducts an annual evaluation of school leadership.</i>		During interview on June 5 th , the Board described process of using ISLLC standards to evaluate effectiveness of school director.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program</u> <i>Measure 1: School facilities meet educational and health and safety standards.</i>	<i>Board certifies that the facilities meet educational and health and safety standards.</i>		Facility was in good order during June 5 th end of year visit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in Support of Program</u> <i>Measure 2: Site Development</i>	<i>Site Development plan adopted by spring of 2014.</i>		Board minutes indicate site development plan has been adopted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Transportation & Food Service</u> <i>Measure 1: Record of costs and student utilization of food service.</i>	<i>School reports on costs and student participation.</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Transportation & Food Service</u> <i>Measure 2: Record of costs and student utilization of transportation service.</i>	<i>School reports on costs and student usage.</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>School Social and Academic Climate</u> <i>Measure 1: Instances of bullying, harassment, or other abusive practices.</i>	1. <i>Bullying and Harassment Policy spelled out clearly in Student, Faculty, and Family Handbook.</i> 2. <i>Establish baseline of incidents of per student bullying.</i>	Policy in Family Handbook	Students and parents report an inclusive environment that is supportive of all students. Students report there are no cliques at the school and that students generally get along	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

			well with each other.	
<u>School Social and Academic Climate</u> <i>Measure 2: Family and Student Satisfaction</i>	<i>Administration of a climate survey administered in-house.</i>	Satisfaction survey was administered to parents and students.	89% of students agree or strongly agree: I feel safe & welcome at HC 81% of students agree or strongly agree: I enjoy school and view it as a positive experience. 100% of parents agree or strongly agree: faculty maintains a positive school climate for learning. 100% of parents agree or strongly agree: my child enjoys school and views it as a positive experience. 90% of parents agree or strongly agree: I feel welcome when I visit the school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>School Social and Academic Climate</u> <i>Measure 3: Student habits of work and learning.</i>	<i>1. Habits of work are reported to students and families three times yearly. 2. Habits of Work and Learning improve or reach proficiency from fall to spring each year for each Division.</i>	HOWL report	School shared sample HOWL reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>School Social and Academic Climate</u> <i>Measure 4: Participation in School Meeting and restorative justice program.</i>	<i>80% of students report via school climate survey, active participation in Restorative Justice and Community Meeting.</i>	Beginning in SY 2014-2015	<i>Students reported on the power of Restorative Justice program. "At other schools, you don't learn how not to do something wrong. Here you do." "We learn now to talk to each other to solve problems."</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Parent and Community Engagement</u> <i>Measure 1: Student participation in activities provided by Community</i>	<i>Each student participates in at least one, HCA Workshop, or club, during the year</i>	Beginning in SY 2014-2015		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

<i>Partnerships</i>				
<u>Parent and Community Engagement</u> <i>Measure 2: Parent Communication</i>	<i>Parents check Jump Rope portal at least once every other week. Parents open weekly newsletter.</i>	Weekly newsletter has a 60% open rate and a 20% click through rate	Parents indicated during interviews that communication between school and home has improved throughout the year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Parent and Community Engagement</u> <i>Measure 3: Parent participation in their children's education.</i>	<i>Family participation in Student Led Conferences. Division 1: 90% of parents attend at least one Student Led Conference per year. Division 2: 60% of parents attend at least one Student Led Conference per year.</i>	Beginning in SY 2014-2015		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
<u>Parent and Community Engagement</u> <i>Measure 4: Celebration of learning and passages</i>	<i>Each student presents to the larger school community twice each year at a minimum.</i>	Beginning in SY 2014-2015		<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet

Summary

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Meets Contract agreement</i>	<i>Partially meets</i>	<i>Does not meet</i>
Student Academic Proficiency		X	
Student Academic Growth	N/A		
Achievement Gaps in proficiency and growth between major student subgroups	N/A		
Student Attendance	X		
Recurrent Enrollment from Year to Year	X		
Postsecondary readiness	N/A		
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		

4. Commendations

Students

The students interviewed were anxious to share many positive stories about their first year at Harpswell Coastal Academy. They shared their enthusiasm with the hands-on approach to school and appreciated the ability to work at their own pace. Students shared such comments as, “I like hands-on better than textbook”, and “I learn better when I can go outside,” “We do field work not field trips.” They also appear to understand their role in their education and realize the importance of taking responsibility for a more self-directed learning style.

They were also very positive about the school’s climate and shared thoughts about the Restorative Justice system by explaining that when there is a conflict the students involved learn how to talk it out, sometimes through a resolution circle. They also shared that discipline works better at HCA, “you can talk to the teachers here. At other schools you don’t learn not to do it. Here you learn now not to do it. Here teachers listen for the entire story.”

Teachers

The teachers interviewed also reported a positive culture. The interview team was impressed with their enthusiasm and noted that collaboration among the teachers was strong. The teachers reported receiving a great deal of support from the school leaders with the development of professional growth goals and regular observations and coaching sessions.

Student and parent feedback regarding the quality of the teaching staff was very positive. Students shared that their teachers are enthusiastic about their subject matter and have a great deal of respect for their students. One student reported that the teachers at HCA, “love to be with us.”

Administration

The co-directors have learned and grown from this first year and work together as a strong team. The staff provided positive feedback regarding their leadership and decision-making skills. Staff seemed to appreciate the decision-making process.

Board

The board has established routines and procedures that are serving the board and the school well. Minutes and agendas are posted as required and they are building a board with a diverse skill set.

Town and Community Partnerships

The school has created strong partnerships with the town of Harpswell and therefore, the town is interested in having them in the building long term. The school has established a number of community partnerships that are equally beneficial to both the school and the organization.

As a start-up school, Harpswell Coastal Academy has made remarkable progress. All constituencies including the community, staff, students, and parents all have positive feedback about the impact of the school.

5. Recommendations

The school has a strong sense of its strengths and weaknesses. The overarching need to continue HCA's remarkable start is to use the experience of the first year to lay down the markers (aka benchmarks) of the operation (i.e. governance, administration, all aspects of the program, the staff, physical plant, fund raising, marketing, etc.) All of this should lead to assembling a comprehensive strategic plan during year two to guide this inspiring enterprise through the remaining three years of the five-year charter contract.

The school should carefully consider the structures they will need to put in place to ensure data needed to measure the performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of the school will be available.

6. Closing Summary

Harpswell Coastal Academy has created an environment that appears to be meeting the needs of their community. Their students are overwhelmingly pleased with their learning experience and the teachers are enthusiastic and have a common vision for the school's instructional program. The school's administration team works well together and clearly understands the school's strengths and next steps. The well-rounded board is providing useful guidance for the school and has established procedures and routines that ensure effective board governance.

Review Team Members
Laurie Pendleton, Chair
John Bird
Shelley Reed