

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held January 28, 2025

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 4:00 PM, January 28th, 2025. Board members attending were Stacey Blanchard, Cherieann Harrison, Tina Meserve, and Susan Walters. Donna Pelletier was excused. A quorum was present.

Attending for Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) were Melinda Browne, Don Fournier, Lena Vitagliano, Chelsea Osgood, Jillian Dearborn, Jennifer Hight, and Stephanie Emery.

Attending from Stride were Todd McIntire, and Tom Travia.

Attending from Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools was Jacinda Cotton-Castro.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Susan motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of December 17th, 2024. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report. Jennifer Hight, CPA, presented the finance report.

2024-2025 Quarter 2 Financial Summary: Maine Virtual Academy shows a surplus of \$365,725 for the six months ended December 31, 2024. We have utilized \$204,022 of ESSER III revenue during this time period. Salaries and benefits remain our biggest expense. We had an unusually substantial increase in our health insurance premiums effective 1/1/25 and have been in discussion on how to best manage that benefit as we move forward. As of December 31, 2024, we had a total of 61 employees made up of 12.5 Administrative positions and 48.5 Teachers/Ed-Techs. Our financial audit for FY'23-24 was completed by Wipfli with an unmodified (clean) opinion. We expect completion of our form 990 at any time.

FY24 Form 990 was postponed for the next meeting.

The Quarter 2 Financials were distributed to the board before this meeting. Jennifer stated that everything was in good condition and there were no surprises from what was budgeted. Though we were positive in the budget, we were down about \$150K, which is not concerning, and was expected. In Quarter 1 we did have \$200K in revenue from ESSER III (ARP), which was a little higher than last year at this time, but expenses were also a little higher too. We will not feel the effects of the covid money stopping until the second half of the year.

Jennifer mentioned that Dr. Browne was informed about a federal grant freeze today. Jennifer was unsure about what was going to happen because of this, so she rushed into Grants4ME and billed everything (i.e., ESEA, IDEA, and Preventing Student Homelessness) for Quarter 2. She stated if there were a freeze, then we would have received only half of our grant money. We needed to keep an eye on this; we were still waiting for \$200K.

Tina asked for clarity about the financial documents. Jennifer and Dr. Browne stated that the Finance Report consisted of the balance sheet, income, and expense documents. Jennifer said she takes the report out of QuickBooks and puts it into the format that the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) wanted. Tina provided Jennifer with feedback on what she would like to see reported to the board in future summaries, specifically comparing budget versus actuals. This way the board would have a clear understanding of how much was spent compared to the budget. Additionally, year-over-year comparisons would help the board observe if MEVA is in line with expectations.

Jennifer expressed that her time was limited, and grants had taken up much of her time. Now that the grants were completed, she could focus more on this request. Jennifer gave examples of the complexities and time it required to prepare what they are looking for. Jennifer proposed that there may be a way to import and manipulate the data in Excel to provide summaries for the board. Tina expressed understanding and stated that having a general sense would be helpful.

Susan motioned to approve the FY25 Quarter 2 Finance Report. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Jennifer reported that FY26 ED279 was released. There was an increase of approximately \$500K, which would help with budgeting for next year.

Dr. Browne planned to reach out to schedule budgeting workshops, one of the workshops can be focused on the employee health insurance and talked through with Chad Cote of Clark Insurance.

Dr. Browne recalled that we had discussed considering changing the insurance renewal timelines, rather than having the board process information in October, vote in November, then renew January 1st. Instead, we would do this during the spring, so the new health insurance would go into effect on July 1st. The purpose of the proposed change was to provide the board with more time to make an informed decision, as well as to provide stability for staff members during the school year. Jillian advised that moving to this timeline may affect rates and deductibles.

Susan made the point that this move would benefit budgetary decisions. Susan observed the way we were doing it now only allowed the board to make their best guess. This resulted in MEVA experiencing a drastic rate increase. We needed a stable budget.

Chelsea Osgood, teacher asked if there were two deductibles in a calendar year? Jillian answered that Chad would get back to us about the deductibles.

Tina stated we can vote to change the timeline today, but if something really concerning came up can we bring this back up in a future meeting. Tina recommended that the board decide today, then we can finalize with the insurance company once we have final details.

Susan motioned to change the employee health insurance renewal timeline from January-to-December to the Fiscal Year (July-to-June). Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Administration. Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report.

SY2024/2025 Overview of Mid-Year Performance:

- 95% post-10/1 Retention. Currently exceeding the target.
- The Winter NWEA MAP had 95%+ participation in each subject.
- Schoolwide, MEVA students outperformed the prior year on the NWEA MAP Growth math, reading, and language usage. MEVA met our self-designed performance measure in each area (median growth greater than 50th %ile).
- The MAP assessments provide valuable data to inform our curriculum mapping, MTSS, and classroom practices.
- Fall to Winter Growth Performance measures for middle school growth (grades 7 & 8): meeting in math (54%); approaching in reading (40%) and language usage (36%). **Our whole school (grades 7-11) met the 45%+ threshold.**

- Overall Accuplacer Results are meeting/exceeding the expectation in math (83%) and reading (86%). The special education subgroup is an area of need.

Winter NWEA MAP Growth went very well with 95% participation in each subject. Dr. Browne sent the NWEA map growth (comprehensive) workbook for review.

Winter 2025 NWEA MAP Growth:

Final Participation Numbers										
	Total Students on Roster	Prelim # Math	Prelim % Math	% SE Complete	Prelim # Reading	Prelim % Reading	% SE Complete	Prelim # Language	Prelim % Language	% SE Complete
7th Grade	44	43	97.73%	91.67%	43	97.73%	91.67%	43	97.73%	91.67%
8th Grade	35	34	97.14%	93.33%	34	97.14%	93.33%	35	100.00%	100.00%
9th Grade	81	77	95.06%	88.89%	78	96.30%	94.44%	77	95.06%	88.89%
10th Grade	125	118	94.40%	91.67%	117	93.60%	88.89%	119	95.20%	91.67%
11th Grade	118	110	93.22%	90.00%	110	93.22%	90.00%	110	93.22%	90.00%
Schoolwide	403	382	94.79%	91.09%	382	94.79%	90.10%	384	95.29%	92.08%
Fall-Winter Growth										
	% of Students who Met			% of Projected Growth Met						
	Math	Reading	Language	Math	Reading	Language				
7th Grade	57.1%	34.3%	34.3%	157.0%	51.9%	48.9%				
8th Grade	50.0%	48.1%	37.9%	87.1%	46.8%	2.7%				
9th Grade	60.9%	47.1%	60.9%	196.3%	64.9%	202.6%				
10th Grade	54.4%	59.8%	51.0%	133.0%	169.9%	0.0%				
11th Grade	65.3%	56.4%	55.4%	404.1%	156.5%	130.7%				

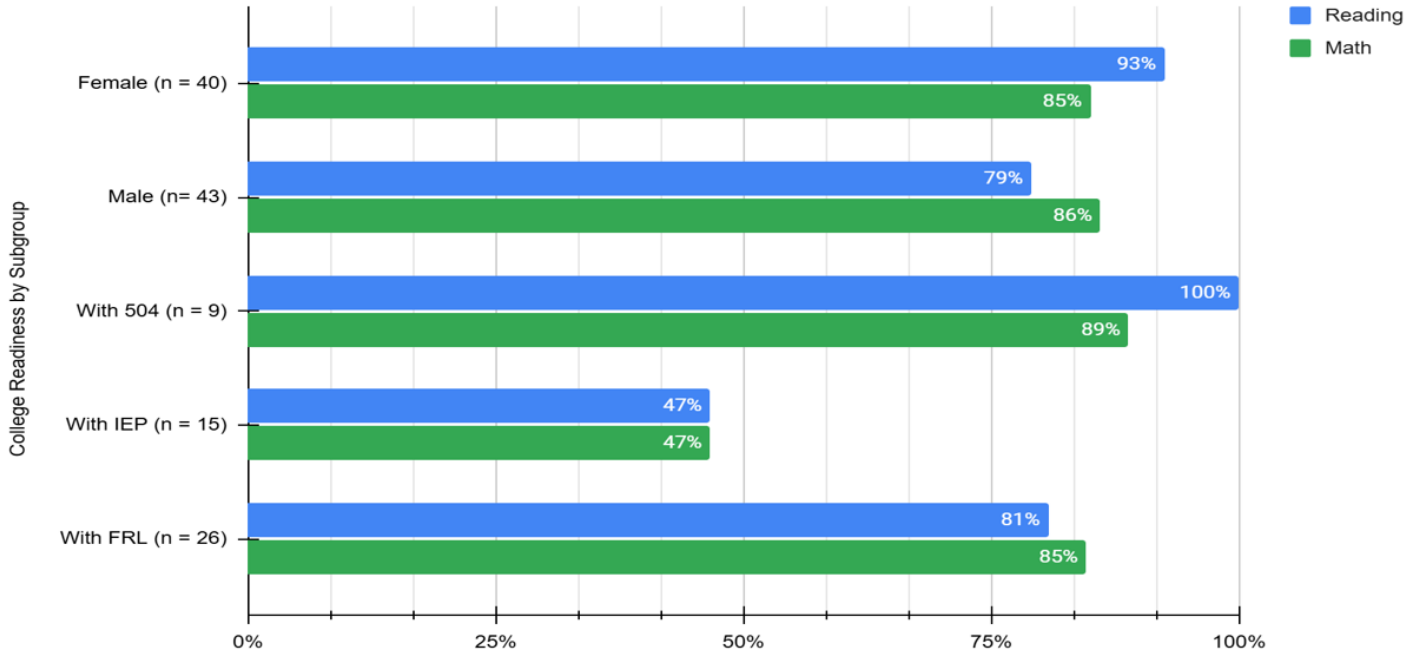
Overall, Winter 2025 NWEA MAP Growth Results:

MATH	By Grade	Met Projected RIT		Did Not Meet Projected RIT		Median Growth Percentile			
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		Math	Reading	Language
Met Projected RIT	336	198	59%	138	41%	Grade 7	32	28	25
Grade 7	35	20	57%	15	43%	Grade 8	35	31	47
Grade 8	28	14	50%	14	50%	Grade 9	56	56	58
Grade 9	69	42	61%	27	39%	Grade 10	60	58	68
Grade 10	103	56	54%	47	46%	Grade 11	57	56	64
Grade 11	101	66	65%	35	35%	Overall	59	53	55
READING	By Grade	Met Projected RIT		Did Not Meet Projected RIT					
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage				
Met Projected RIT	335	176	53%	159	47%				
Grade 7	35	12	34%	23	66%				
Grade 8	27	13	48%	14	52%				
Grade 9	70	33	47%	37	53%				
Grade 10	102	61	60%	41	40%				
Grade 11	101	57	56%	44	44%				
LANGUAGE	By Grade	Met Projected RIT		Did Not Meet Projected RIT					
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage				
Met Projected RIT	338	174	51%	164	49%				
Grade 7	35	12	34%	23	66%				
Grade 8	29	11	38%	18	62%				
Grade 9	69	42	61%	27	39%				
Grade 10	104	53	51%	51	49%				
Grade 11	101	56	55%	45	45%				

Accuplacer – College Readiness Overall and by Subgroup:

Overall - 87 Seniors			*Includes graduated juniors
	Completed	College Ready	
Reading	95%	86%	
Math	95%	83%	

College Readiness by Subgroup



What we need to do:

- Continue schoolwide collaborations – valuable insights are shared at department meetings.
- Continue encouraging students to attend MTSS sessions to build their growth skills.
- Continue incorporating growth-building skills into courses and lessons.
- Offer reading contests and other activities that generate excitement about books.
- Spend time reviewing students’ data. Offer student-reflection activities and rewards for meeting growth expectations.

Assessment Calendar 2024-2025

Assessment Type	Fall Dates	Winter Dates	Spring Dates
NWEA	September 10, 11, & 12, 2024 (Makeup Day - September 13, 2024)	January 14, 15, & 16, 2025 (Makeup Day - January 17, 2025)	April 29, 30, May 1, 2025 (Makeup Day - May 2, 2025)
MEA (ELA & Math)	October 7-25, 2024	NA	May 12-23, 2025
MEA (Science)	NA	NA	April 7-17, 2025 (HS) May 12-23, 2025 (8 th Grade)
ACCUPLACER	September 10, 11, & 12, 2024, with makeup days scheduled throughout the year	Ongoing	Ongoing
IReady	<p>7th & 8th Graders - Standards Mastery assessment, August 26-30, 2024 (during FOX Time and 3 pm with Christina)</p> <p>9th Graders for Fall 2024 - August 26-30, 2024 (3 pm with Christina)</p> <p>10th Grader - August 26-30, 2024, diagnostic in the Fall ONLY to inform MTSS practice related to Algebra I skills (3 pm with Christina)</p> <p>Reading This will be completed on an ongoing basis based on NWEA data for students who have an identified need for a deeper look at skill deficits.</p>	January 16-24, 2025 (For mid-year enrollees only)	April 29, 30, and May 1, 2025, after NWEA testing

MEVA Strategic Goals – Reading Growth

Reading Growth.

Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance BASELINE	Short term Goal for SY 2024-25 NEXT YEAR	Long Term Goal SY 2028-2029 FIVE YEARS
1.4a	Subgroup Performance: Maine State Assessment (NWEA MAP) 3rd-8th	MEVA reported the following subgroup performance: Students on IEPS: 36% Students on 504s: 44% F+R Lunch: 43% Sex/Gender: Male: 32%; Female: 46%	Partially Meet (Approaching) subgroup performance measure in reading, with three out of five (3/5) subgroups achieving the 45% threshold, by next year.	Meet subgroup performance measure in reading, with five out of five (5/5) subgroups achieving the 45% threshold, for SY-2028/2029.

- The Fall to Winter MAP Growth Results illustrate that we are closing the gap on this strategic goal. As of Winter 2025, we have accomplished the short-term goal of at least three out of five subgroups meeting expectations.
- Middle school (grades 7 & 8) subgroups: IEP (44%), 504 (75%), F&R (37%), Male (50%), Female (52%).

MEVA Strategic Goals (Updated) – Math Proficiency

Math Proficiency.

Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance BASELINE	Short term Goal for SY 2024-25 NEXT YEAR	Long Term Goal SY 2028-29 FIVE YEARS
1.1b	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment, Math	For all students assessed, MEVA reported the following grade level and overall performance (difference from applicable state averages): Grade 7 – 26% (-12%); Grade 8 – 21% (-18%); Grade 10 – 26% (-16%); and Overall – 24% (-16%).	Partially Meet (Approaching) performance measure in math proficiency, with three out of three (3/3) grade levels achieving within fifteen percent (-15%) of the applicable state averages, by next year, for all students assessed.	Meet performance measure in math, with three out of three (3/3) grade levels achieving within five percent (+/- 5%) of the applicable state averages by SY 2028-29, for all students assessed.

The single term Winter NWEA MAP achievement results show that we are closing the gap towards this strategic goal. Percentages of students who are above the sixtieth percentile in math:

- Grade 7 – 40%. ME 38%.
- Grade 8 – 32%. ME 39%.
- Grade 10 – 50%. ME 42%.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

- English Language Arts (reading and language) growth continues to be our largest area of need, especially in the middle school.
- Math proficiency is improving, but the middle school (grades 7 & 8) needs attention.
- We are aiming for consistency across grade levels with respect to growth, achievement/proficiency, and school climate.

Tina observed within the curriculum maps, it looked like middle school math was IXL. Tina asked if the teachers did direct instruction of the concepts and was IXL used for practice? Dr. Browne replied, yes, to both questions.

Stacey asked about the lower reading scores. Dr. Browne said we believe there were rapid guessing issues.

Dr. Browne made the point that MEVA served students who enrolled behind in their studies. We focused on closing their academic gaps. The process was important to realizing our mission and vision.

Mid-Year Check-In Meeting with MCSC:

- We met with the MCSC on January 9th to review progress towards our strategic goals and performance measures that need attention.
- The tone of the meeting was supportive. We shared MEVA's practices of MTSS and curriculum mapping.
- We have recently shared our Winter 2025 MAP Growth results, which are strong.
- The MCSC will prepare a report that we will share with you in March.

Governance.

Grade 7 Curriculum Maps – Core Courses.

The maps were distributed to the board prior to the meeting. Dr. Browne thanked Tina, Donna, and other board members for their involvement. Dr. Browne reported that representatives from each department participated, from a mix of grade levels. Donna provided great feedback as well.

Tina mentioned that they talked about having consistent maps, so when parents and students viewed them, it was clear and easily understandable to them. The committee felt confident to move forward with board approval.

Susan said that she was impressed; this was a huge project, and months invested. Susan thanked those who participated in developing the maps.

Cherieann motioned group the curriculum maps. Cherieann seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Susan motioned to approve the Grade 7 and 8 Curriculum Maps – Core Courses. Cherieann seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) presentation.

Jacinda Cotton- Castro, Executive Director of MAPCS, shared that the alliance was a newly formed organization. Their purpose was to help support all the charter schools in Maine. She stated that charter schools were all doing similar work. Jacinda identified where schools could work together.

Areas needing support, philanthropy, and development:

- The alliance was looking at collaborative fundraising in the fall. Charters were supposed to be more philanthropic.
- For marketing, the alliance was looking at telling the stories of each of the charter schools. We had approval to put a video together to drive people to school websites. She was working with Lana of the commission regarding this topic.
- To address health insurance concerns, we needed to work in solidarity.

Jacinda stated she would love MEVA to join the group. The annual fee was \$2,500. She pointed out that there was so much overlap and areas we could save money on.

Tina asked for clarity on the annual fee, is it \$2,500 from January to December? Jacinda said the alliance was working on clarifying the fee period. Cherieann asked for clarity on what the alliance was, whether it was a vendor or outside party? Jacinda replied that the alliance was a non-profit and was not technically considered a vendor. The alliance was looking for other alliances and businesses to get involved. At the present time, only Maine public charter schools were members. They wanted to reduce pressure off public charter schools and drive the mission of charter schools forward. Jacinda reported they will offer policy collaboration as well as

work independently among schools. Board members planned to review the MAPCS website to learn more about the organization's purpose. <https://www.mapcs.net/>

Review of SY-2024/2025 Board Goals.

- Goal 1: In order to support administrators and staff to provide a high-quality learning experience for the MEVA student population, all School Board members will participate in the required professional development opportunities provided by MCSC per MEVA's performance framework, June 2025.
- Goal 2: By September 2025, the MEVA Board will have a sustainable governing board of 6-8 diverse members who bring the needed skills to the board to ensure effective governance.
- Goal 3: By August 2025, the MEVA Board will conduct effective oversight of the academic program and ensure that all members understand where the organization is on its path to closing any achievement gaps.
- Goal 4: By August 2025, each MEVA Board member will exhibit responsibility for attaining the goals of the board.

Tina shared a discussion she had with Donna about having the board review the goals, quarterly, and see how we are doing:

Goal 1 - Former weakness, making sure we complete training was important.

Goal 2 - Right now, we have five members, we are one shy of our goal. If anyone knows of a person that would be a thoughtful and engaged board member, we encourage you to invite them to consider what we are doing. That is what we did with Cherieann. Donna will then meet with the person before they are introduced to the board. Regarding the diverse members, Cherieann for example is not a teacher and works in a different field, but having people from different walks in life is important.

Goal 3 – The work that Melinda is doing and determining where the achievement gaps may be, also seeing what the school community is doing to address them is obvious from our agendas.

Goal 4 - Everyone acting on what they can do to achieve our goals. Which is part of our goal plan.

Updated board training data was provided by the MCSC. The board had completed two of the nine required training courses. Two of the board members had completed all the training. Training was due on June 30th, 2025.

Public Discussion.

The next board meeting: February 25th, 2025.

Adjournment.

Tina adjourned the meeting at 5:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore