

► QUICK FACTS

- LD1553, Ch. 414 was passed In 2011, allowing for the creation of a Commission that would authorize new schools in the state, known as "public charter schools"
- Currently, the Charter Commission operates under limitations, capping the number of operators at 10 and restricting enrollment of Maine's two virtual charter schools to 1,000 students total
- Maine's 10 public charter schools serve approximately 2,500 students which is less than 1% of the total number of students in the state
- Ranging in program emphasis and delivery styles, Maine's public charter schools serve a wide variety of needs and appeal to myriad interests

"We are operating in a rugged environment, constantly responding to new needs and wondering if we have the resources to meet those needs."

"This Is a grand opportunity for evolution."

"We find ourselves pushing for higher achievement while trying to figure out the degree of support we can offer."

► STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

- **LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC** - Much like schools in the rest of the state, Maine's public charter schools rapidly stepped up to meet the challenges of remote schooling during the onset of the global health crisis, offering multiple ways of engaging with learning and providing additional supports for emotional well-being and social connectedness.
- **CAPITALIZING ON PARTNERSHIPS** - Public charter schools in the state are building deep relationships with each other and their local, traditional school counterparts to capitalize on opportunities that provide more and better services to students and families.

▶ ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONER

- We are statutorily required to provide an annual report to the Commissioner of Education. We will fulfill this requirement by the end of next week, February 12, 2021. At the same time, we will ensure that soft copies of the report are distributed to members of this Committee.
- This year's annual report will provide an in-depth summary of the performance of our portfolio of schools for the 2019 - 2020 school year which was interrupted in March of 2020. The report also provides brief performance updates for this school year and the new Executive Director's vision for the Commission.

▶ ON THE HORIZON FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

- **THERE IS A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS** - It is apparent that the last decade of work has laid a foundation from which to build a world-class charter school ecosystem that provides nurturing environments, innovative approaches to instruction, and diverse options to our families. We are building a culture of continuous improvement to drive greater student learning.
- **REVITALIZED MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS** - Over the next few months, the Commission will be engaging in a rigorous investigation of our past work, a deep analysis of opportunities and assets, and authentic conversations with our community about where and how we add value. We have an opportunity to provide more clarity to stakeholders about who we are and what we do and intend on better serving the public charter schools.
- **BRINGING OPERATIONS UP TO NATIONAL STANDARDS** - While our team is small, they are mighty! The Commission has been operating as a start-up since its inception and now is the time to transition to a more thoughtful, strategic advocate for school performance. We will begin building systems that optimize our operations and bring us up to standard.
- **STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF GOVERNING BOARDS, SCHOOL LEADERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF** - A key role for the Commission will be to develop talent. In doing so, we ensure that public charter school teachers are better prepared to serve students, that our Heads of Schools are more capable leaders, and that our Boards can effectively hold the school accountable for the covenants of the charter contract.

MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

The mission of the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) is to authorize and monitor charter schools across the state. In doing so, the MCSC seeks to increase student achievement by supporting high-performing schools, promote innovative educational opportunities in diverse public school settings, create new professional opportunities for educators, and novel approaches for community engagement in the design, execution, and delivery of education to the state's children.