



**Memorandum responding to Education and Cultural Affairs
Legislative Committee questions submitted to Maine Ocean
School on January 4, 2022.**

Dear Committee Members | We include these responses to questions we received on January 4, 2022 from your Committee. You will find additional useful information in our 2020-2021 Annual Report. Note, your questions are designated with ‘*Q:*’ in italics and our responses are designated with ‘*R:*’. | Thank you.

Q: Due to privacy issues will there ever be a baseline and follow up reports of SAT and/or NWEA scores from which to measure student growth at the school?

R: Yes. We can develop a baseline if we grow the program to an appropriate level of approximately 50-100 students under regular, non-pandemic conditions. The baseline would also depend on students being enrolled in the school for multiple years at all grade levels to determine what a baseline would look like at these enrollment levels. These enrollment levels are unobtainable unless LD1389 is passed.

Q: Can you share information on your students' post secondary performance, job placement, success and persistence?

R: Of our six graduates, five applied to post secondary institutions. All were accepted and four pursued enrollment. The remaining students are currently employed in marine transportation fields in Maine.

Q: Who is responsible for the supervision and performance evaluations of staff?

R: The Executive Director is responsible for the evaluation of teaching and support staff, and does so in accordance with the GCOA policy for Supervision and Evaluation of Professional Staff. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the evaluation of the Executive Director under policy CBI.

Q: What credentials and years of teaching experience and supervision do they have?

R: The Executive Director has a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, 5 years of supervisory experience, and 8 years of teaching experience.

Q: Do all teachers and supervisors have current certifications for all the classes they teach?

R: Our staff members currently hold certifications to teach Social Studies and Science for grades 7-12, as well as Bachelor degrees in Mathematics and History and Masters degrees in Biology. All staff members have the appropriate prerequisites in secondary education to teach high school level courses. We have been fulfilling other courses, based on our Program Plan, to the best of our ability given the promise of a growing student body and funding, often with outside consultation for resources and guidance.

Q: Where could we learn more about the school's History, Foreign Language and Visual and Performing Arts courses?

R: Additional information regarding our courses can be found in the Program Plan approved by this Committee in 2017. The School's Program Plan can be accessed through this [link](#), or by visiting <http://www.maineoceanschool.org/bylaws---policies.html>.

Q: What is the enrollment for the 2021-2022 academic year?

R: For the 2021-2022 academic year, 17 students were documented in the October 1, 2021 enrollment report submitted to the Maine State Department of Education.

Q: How many total community partner discussions and site visits were offered to allow students a minimum of 10 experiences?

R: Over twenty maritime professionals have acted as community speakers at Maine Ocean School, including ship captains, sailmakers, yacht designers, nuclear engineers, and marine biologists. Appearances have also been made by legislators Jared Golden, Scott Cuddy, and Erin Herbig, and faculty from the University of Maine and College of the Atlantic. Though COVID-19 has hindered our ability to offer as many site visits, students have visited Rockport Marine, the Maine Port Authority, Penobscot Marine Museum, Sears Island, the State House, the Schooner Roseway, among others. We plan to host at least 10 community partner discussions in the spring semester to aid in grade 11/12 student capstone projects and to contribute to the academic programming for our Marine Foundations course in Spring 2022.

Q: Could you briefly describe your partnership with Penobscot Marine Museum, University of Maine Hutchinson Center, Waldo County Y, RSU 20 and the Waldo County Technical Center and how your students utilize these facilities and course offerings? If students attend the Waldo County Technical School, does current participation reduce the number of slots for students at the three sending high schools?

R: In the first year of operation (2018-2019), students attended science courses at the Hutchinson Center and utilized the Waldo County YMCA for swimming instruction. The Penobscot Marine Museum has consistently provided field trips and volunteering opportunities for the students during all years of operation. Museum staff have also consulted on student projects, program operations, and formally serve on the Board of Trustees Program Committee. RSU 20 and Maine Ocean School have an ongoing MOU to provide a physical location for the School. Under this agreement, the Maine Ocean School also has access to the district's business manager and nursing staff. Finally, three students are currently enrolled in the half day small engine and welding programs at Waldo County Technical Center. Students have demonstrated significant success in this dual programming, and have obtained recognition in the National Technical Honor Society. To our knowledge, their enrollment does not affect the number of slots available to students from other schools.

Q: Should we assume that the school is financially sound now and in the predictable future?

R: The public funding mechanism for Maine Ocean School is through the Charter School Formula. As such, for the first five years of operation we received the EPS formula per student based on October 1 enrollment. It is important to note, in accordance with Title 20-a, Chapter 606-B, § 15683-B, as we move into the sixth year of operation we will receive funding based on the enrollment for the previous academic year. With an enrollment of 45 students we would be able to fund 80% of the estimated staff budget with those public funds. However, our current funding mechanism requires the Maine Ocean School Foundation and grants to the school to make up for lack of full public funding. These additional funding mechanisms are uncertain and unpredictable, as competitive and philanthropic grants may not be awarded. The Foundation relies on philanthropic leadership and giving (presently affected by COVID-19 and economic inflation) and does not currently maintain an endowment fund. Though the financial status of the School is presently more stable, any sizable growth will require the current funding model to be re-assessed. Specifically, the costs associated with personnel, Special Education and other services, and facilities required to support a larger student body we aim to have per our strategic plan would place a greater demand on the Maine Ocean School Foundation. The Maine Ocean School is prepared to provide this Committee with alternative Program options that are better in line with our current funding model and/or suggestions for alternative funding sources.

Q: Could you briefly explain the chart illustrating how you have met or exceeded the organizational and residential targets for the current year and the chart of 6 color coded goals for year three and four?

R: We believe the chart referenced is the strategic plan from the School's 2019-2020 Annual Report. With respect to the residential target, we were advised to eliminate the School's residential requirement in order to extend the sunset clause during the 2018-2019 legislature. Thus, in accordance with our statute the School no longer has a residential requirement. With respect to organizational targets, defined here as numbers of students and staff, in our third year of operation we surpassed our goal of 20 students. Unfortunately, this year as we face the challenges and instabilities to growth and enrollment presented by the sunset clause, COVID-19, an inadequate funding model our enrollment has declined. Our graduation target has been similarly impacted.

Q: Do you track and report any student participation in co and extracurricular activities offered at the school or in conjunction with RSU #71?

R: The Maine Ocean School staff tracks students' participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, student council, band, yearbook club, and scouting. Currently, 63% of our student body participates in extracurricular activities. In addition, due to the limited number of students, we do not report the specifics of their participation to ensure the anonymity of our student body.

Q: Are students eligible for National Honor Society or other state or nationally recognized student honors or groups?

Given the infancy of the school, we have not yet established a chapter of National Honor Society or comparable honors group. In anticipation of approval of LD1389, the Board of Trustees Program

Committee is developing a rubric to identify students eligible for Honors and High Honors status upon graduation.