

## **Maine Learning Innovations**

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held September 17, 2024

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 3:00 PM, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Tina Meserve, and Susan Walters. Nicholas “Nick” Gannon resigned prior to the meeting. A quorum was present.

Attending from Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) were Melinda Browne, Don Fournier, Christina O’Grady, Lena Vitagliano, Chelsea Osgood, Gayle Langis, Jillian Dearborn, and Stephanie Emery.

Attending from Dr. Mary Madden and Associates was Mary Madden.

Candidate Cherieann Harrison attended and was voted/moved as a member of the MEVA governing board at the meeting.

### **Opening Items.**

**Approval of Minutes.** Tina motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

### **Slate of Board Members and Officers.**

Donna reported that Nick was unable to continue his involvement with the board due to many personal obligations. Donna mentioned she appreciated the value he brought to the board along with his viewpoints.

Slate of Officers and Members:

- Stacey Blanchard, Secretary.
- Cherieann Harrison, (Incoming) Member.
- Tina Meserve, Member.
- Donna Pelletier, Chair.
- Susan Walters, Treasurer.

Tina motioned to approve the slate of board members and officers. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Going forward, Cherieann will be participating in future motions.

### **Independent Third-Party Evaluation Report.**

Dr. Madden shared slides with her talking points. Parent and Student case studies were asked the question “Why choose to enroll at MEVA”? Reasons:

- Special Needs (mental and/or physical).
- Better structured curriculum when compared to homeschooling.
- Prior charter schooling.
- Experiences with bullying.
- COVID-19 (realizations, safety).

Dr. Madden mentioned that most people found orientation to be very helpful, some found it overwhelming, but overall, it was very helpful.

Dr. Madden read the “Highlights of MEVA” as follows. Families felt that class video recordings were very helpful to reference back to.

- Video recordings of lessons.
- Weekly newsletter for parents.
- Opportunity to pursue college classes.
- Teachers and staff are readily available and respond quickly.
- School values students’ health.
- Teachers know me.

Dr. Madden discussed how one of the challenges she came across was related to the lack of peer connections. She stated to the board that there were opportunities in the after-school clubs at MEVA, but some individuals felt they could not make connections or did not join the clubs. Others connected with peers outside of MEVA. Dr. Madden observed that MEVA did not have other gatherings outside of in-person state assessments. Dr. Madden continued to read the slides.

#### Academic Progress:

- From failing to straight A student.
- Parent surprised at how quickly her daughter with autism excelled.
- Doing better at home – able to focus.
- More interested in learning.
- Grades are the same, but confidence and understanding are higher.

Dr. Madden then read her overview of recommendations as follows. She argued MEVA should continue doing what they were doing in various areas. Dr. Madden shared a message from a parent who recommended that MEVA educate other districts about the school and direct parents to move into virtual education who needed it. Lastly, enhance communication during enrollment so parents clearly understand when the communication and process shifts from K12 to MEVA.

- Continue to provide recordings of lessons.
- Teachers and staff continue current practice of quick responses to student and parent questions and issues.
- Provide public school guidance counselors with information on MEVA.
- Enhance communication during enrollment to ensure caregivers know when process moves from K12 to MEVA.
- Consider if and how to introduce the use of artificial intelligence to students.
- Consider ways to promote peer interaction within the virtual education model MEVA uses.
- Identify where in the chain of communications parents are being told students will have in-person opportunities (other than assessments).

Student Quote: "My academics haven't only improved. My mental health has improved, my physical confidence and appearance. I am losing weight. I am in a good mindset that I am losing weight. Because of how confident this school has made me; I am trying to eat better. I'm doing a bunch of these things."

Parent Quote: The mother shared, "I didn't see any huge transition in grades from that school to this school, but I definitely saw her confidence in getting things done and handing them in and knowing what she was supposed to do improved."

There is an additional report regarding the Panorama Survey results that will be shared with Dr. Browne and will be in future reports. This will be included in the 2-year study.

Tina asked Dr. Madden if there was a percentage that she was trying to survey? Where did the number of fifteen (15) individuals come from?

Dr. Madden mentioned that these cases were in-depth studies and considered qualitative work. She said that fifteen (15) was a good number for the newly enrolled group only. In the next proposal, Dr. Madden would look at the newly enrolled students over a two-year period, however she will also look at students who completed the Panorama Survey.

Dr. Browne stated that the response rates were high with the Panorama Surveys at MEVA.

Stacey asked Dr. Madden if MEVA will follow the same families over the next two-year period? Dr. Madden said, yes, provided their enrollment continued at MEVA. That was the plan if accepted.

Tina motioned to approve the Independent Third-Party Evaluation Report. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

### **Finance Report.**

Jillian Dearborn on behalf of Jennifer Hight, CPA: The FY24 financial audit was underway. Work was scheduled for the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>. Submissions were currently in progress.

Dr. Browne stated we planned to share the financially-related policies that are approved today with the auditors. Dr. Browne said that the FY25 Quarter-1 financials will be the next presentation from Jennifer Hight at the November 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

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

Dr. Browne prefaced by sharing MEVA's Mission and Vision to inform the new board member.

MEVA Mission and Vision.

School Mission:

Maine Virtual Academy's (MEVA) mission is to develop **each** student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high-quality learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of **alternative educational options**. MEVA will develop an **Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)** with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs. MEVA's rigorous curriculum is **aligned** to the eight Maine content areas, the **Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards**.

School Vision:

MEVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will improve student learning outcomes through **individualized instruction**, as evidenced by **student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction**. MEVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in **post-secondary education and career opportunities**. Our graduates will be **prepared** for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities.

SY-2024/2025 Progress:

- MEVA has a structured assessment program to monitor progress towards our Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) performance measures and strategic goals.

- Fall '23 to fall '24 growth was strong for math, reading, and language usage, except for eighth grade.
- The iReady assessment is used to illuminate students' algebra needs.
- Curriculum maps are adjusted to suit assessment data.
- We share data and evidence-based practices at our weekly Process Improvement Meetings.

Fall '24 NWEA Preliminary Participation – 9/14/2024:

Preliminary Numbers 9/14/24										
	Total Students on Roster	Prelim # Math	Prelim % Math	% SE Complete	Prelim # Reading	Prelim % Reading	% SE Complete	Prelim # Language	Prelim % Language	% SE Complete
7th Grade	38	37	97.37%	100.00%	37	97.37%	100.00%	37	97.37%	100.00%
8th Grade	29	28	96.55%	100.00%	27	93.10%	92.31%	28	96.55%	100.00%
9th Grade	81	77	95.06%	89.47%	78	96.30%	94.74%	76	93.83%	89.47%
10th Grade	117	107	91.45%	85.00%	105	89.74%	78.95%	102	87.18%	72.50%
11th Grade	116	99	85.34%	76.19%	100	86.21%	76.19%	97	83.62%	71.43%
Schoolwide	381	348	91.34%	66.99%	347	91.08%	78.64%	340	89.24%	76.24%

MEVA Strategic Goals (Updated) – Math Proficiency:

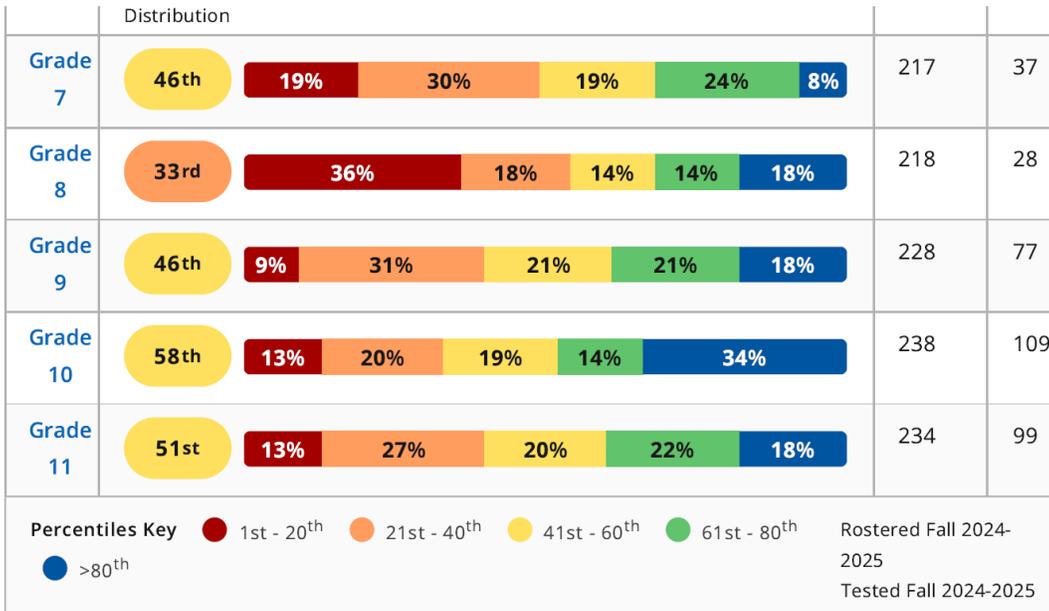
**Math Proficiency.**



Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance <b>BASELINE</b>	Short term Goal for SY 2024-25 <b>NEXT YEAR</b>	Long Term Goal SY 2028-29 <b>FIVE YEARS</b>
1.1b	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment, <b>Math</b>	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%); <b>Grade 10 – 26% (-16%);</b> 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.

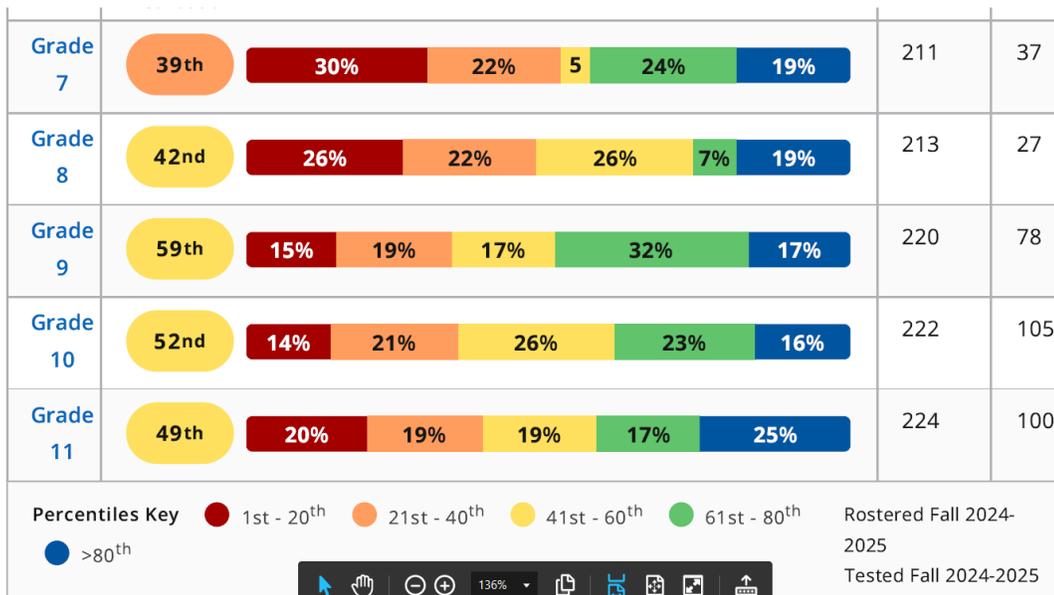
Fall '24 Math Achievement:

- Median Achievement Percentile by Grade Level.
- NWEA MAP Achievement Results – September 14, 2024.
- Grade 8 is the biggest concern.



Fall '24 Reading Achievement:

- Median Achievement Percentile by Grade Level.
- NWEA MAP Achievement Results – September 14, 2024.
- Grades 7 & 8 are the biggest concerns.



MEVA Strategic Goals – Reading Growth:

**Reading Growth.**

Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance <b>BASELINE</b>	Short term Goal for SY 2024-25 <b>NEXT YEAR</b>	Long Term Goal SY 2028-2029 <b>FIVE YEARS</b>
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.



**Student Growth Summary Report**

Aggregate by School

Term: Fall 2024-2025  
District: Maine Virtual Academy

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
Growth Comparison Period: Fall 2024 - Fall 2025  
Weeks of Instruction: Start - 2 (Fall 2024)  
End - 2 (Fall 2025)  
Grouping: None  
Small Group Display: No

**Maine Virtual Academy**

Math: Math K-12

Grade (Fall 2025)	Total Number of Growth Events	Comparison Periods						Growth Evaluated Against									
		Fall 2024			Fall 2025			Growth		Grade-Level Norms			Student Norms				
		Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	Projected School Growth	School Growth Index	School Conditional Growth Percentile	Number of Students With Growth Projections	Number of Students Who Met Their Growth Projection	Percentage of Students Who Met Growth Projection	Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile	
7	0	**			**			**						**			
8	14	210.7	18.0	15	217.3	20.7	23	7	2.4	5.5	0.65	74	14	7	50	46	
9	43	220.3	15.9	33	231.8	18.2	72	12	1.8	3.4	4.18	99	43	36	84	82	
10	53	226.2	18.7	50	239.4	26.4	85	13	2.9	2.8	5.85	99	53	36	68	73	
11	52	231.3	21.3	60	236.2	26.5	68	5	2.5	2.6	1.31	91	52	29	56	64	

**Math: Math K-12**





**Student Growth Summary Report**

Aggregate by School

Term: Fall 2024-2025  
District: Maine Virtual Academy

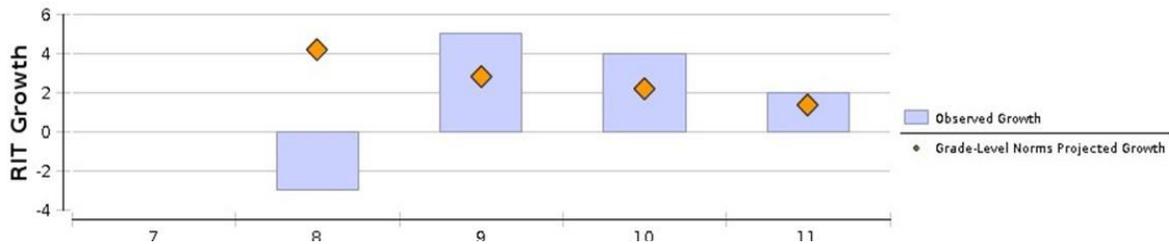
Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
Growth Comparison Period: Fall 2024 - Fall 2025  
Weeks of Instruction: Start- 2 (Fall 2024)  
End- 2 (Fall 2025)  
Grouping: None  
Small Group Display: No

**Maine Virtual Academy**

Language Arts:  
Reading

Grade (Fall 2025)	Total Number of Growth Events‡	Comparison Periods						Growth		Growth Evaluated Against							
		Fall 2024			Fall 2025			Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	Grade-Level Norms			Student Norms				
		Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile			Projected School Growth	School Conditional Growth Index	School Conditional Growth Percentile	Number of Students With Growth Projections	Number of Students Who Met Their Growth Projection	Percentage of Students Who Met Growth Projection	Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile	
7	0	**			**			**					**				
8	13	213.5	17.3	49	210.3	13.2	18	-3	3.3	4.2	-5.16	1	13	3	23	5	
9	44	218.5	18.0	54	223.3	16.9	69	5	1.7	2.8	1.18	88	44	28	64	66	
10	52	219.7	16.0	54	223.5	15.8	60	4	1.4	2.2	1.03	85	52	29	56	55	
11	52	221.1	18.9	49	223.4	19.4	50	2	1.8	1.3	0.60	73	52	25	48	46	

Language Arts: Reading



**Student Growth Summary Report**

Aggregate by School

Term: Fall 2024-2025  
District: Maine Virtual Academy

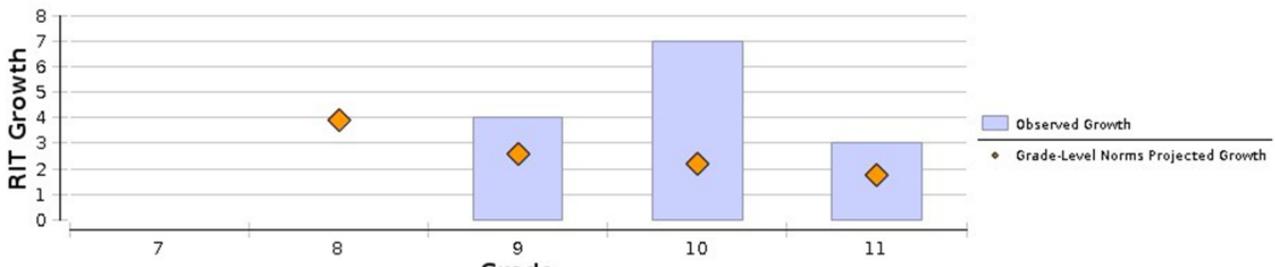
Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
Growth Comparison Period: Fall 2024 - Fall 2025  
Weeks of Instruction: Start- 2 (Fall 2024)  
End- 2 (Fall 2025)  
Grouping: None  
Small Group Display: No

**Maine Virtual Academy**

Language Arts:  
Language Usage

Grade (Fall 2025)	Total Number of Growth Events‡	Comparison Periods						Growth		Growth Evaluated Against							
		Fall 2024			Fall 2025			Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	Grade-Level Norms			Student Norms				
		Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile			Projected School Growth	School Conditional Growth Index	School Conditional Growth Percentile	Number of Students With Growth Projections	Number of Students Who Met Their Growth Projection	Percentage of Students Who Met Growth Projection	Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile	
7	0	**			**			**					**				
8	14	208.4	18.3	29	208.6	26.5	17	0	5.6	3.9	-2.88	1	14	7	50	30	
9	42	216.5	16.0	58	220.2	18.7	69	4	1.7	2.6	0.76	78	42	23	55	58	
10	50	219.0	14.1	64	225.6	15.7	85	7	1.7	2.2	3.36	99	50	33	66	64	
11	51	221.0	17.5	64	224.4	20.0	73	3	1.9	1.8	1.38	92	51	28	55	57	

Language Arts: Language Usage



Fall '23 to fall '24 growth reports: The diamond represents the projected growth, showing where MEVA students should be. Observed growth is the rectangle, so it is favorable when the diamond is in the rectangle.

Continuing MEVA students did very well on the NWEA MAP Growth, with the largest need presented by current Grade 8.

Updated 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 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
ACCUPLACER	September 10, 11, & 12, 2024, with makeup days scheduled throughout the year	Ongoing	Ongoing
iReady	<p><b>7<sup>th</sup> &amp; 8<sup>th</sup> Graders</b> - Standards Mastery assessment, August 26-30, 2024 (during FOX Time and 3 pm with Christina)</p> <p><b>9<sup>th</sup> Graders</b> for Fall 2024 - August 26-30, 2024 (3 pm with Christina)</p> <p><b>10<sup>th</sup> Grader</b> - August 26-30, 2024, diagnostic in the Fall ONLY to inform MTSS practice related to Algebra I skills (3 pm with Christina)</p> <p><b>Reading</b> 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

Dr. Browne introduced Dr. Christina O’Grady, Curriculum Coordinator who prepared an iReady Algebra Report. Dr. Browne said that the NWEA MAP Growth was not providing all the data that MEVA needed to address our strategic math proficiency goal. As a result, MEVA included the iReady assessment within our annual assessment calendar.

## Initial Data

# i-Ready

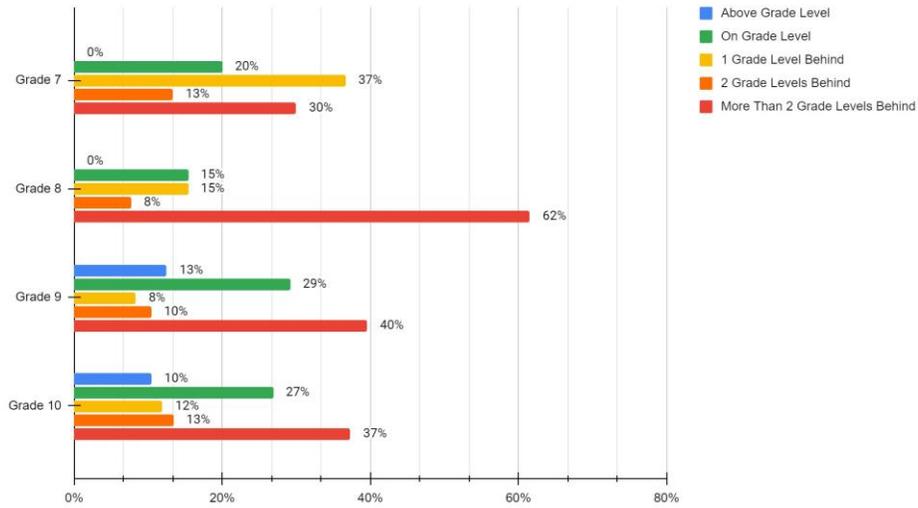
Participation Rates (as of 9/13/24)

- 7th Grade: 83%
- 8th Grade: 63% Complete, 8% in Progress
- 9th Grade: 71% Complete, 4% In Progress
- 10th Grade: 69% Complete, 6% in Progress

\*Note participation does not include students in RISE or ASPIRE, they have their own plans on which students they are testing.

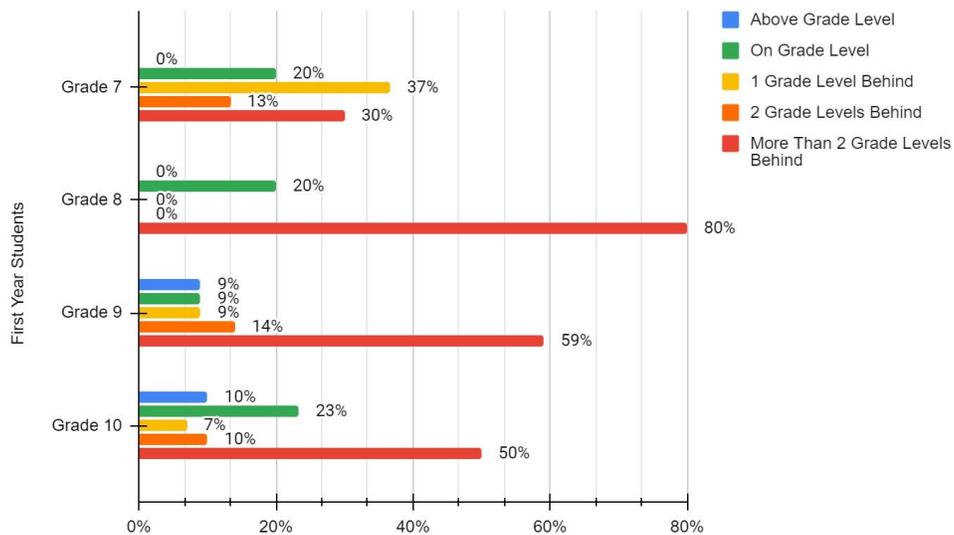
## Overall Grade Level Data

On Grade Level Data



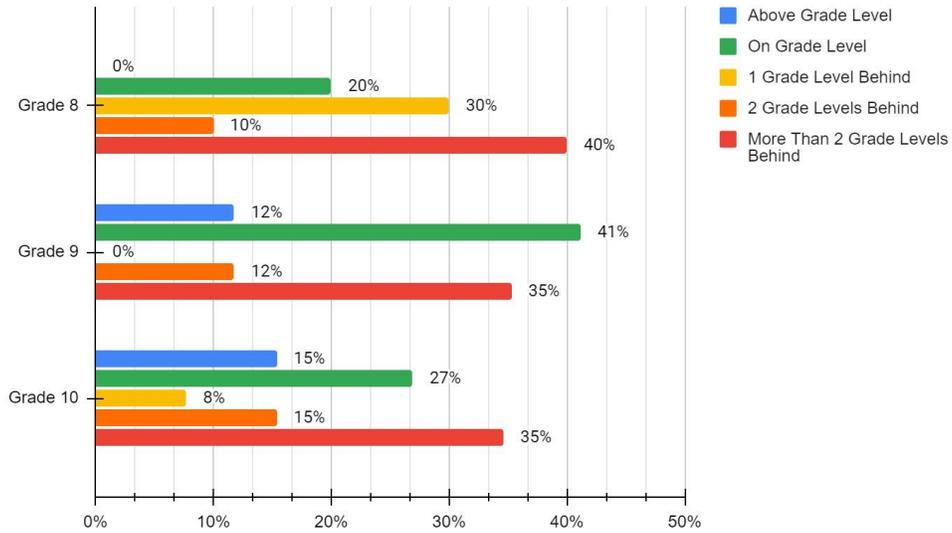
## First Year Grade Level Data

First Year Students



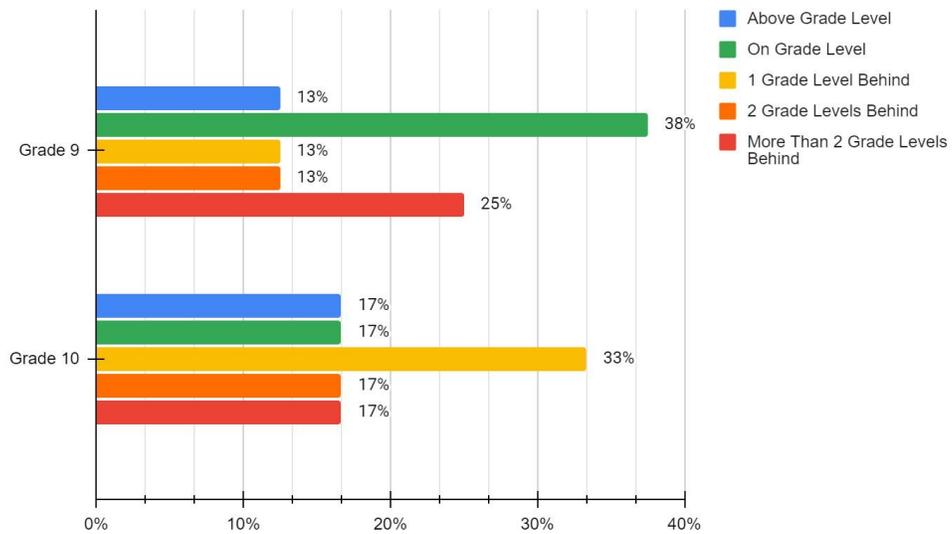
# Second Year Grade Level Data

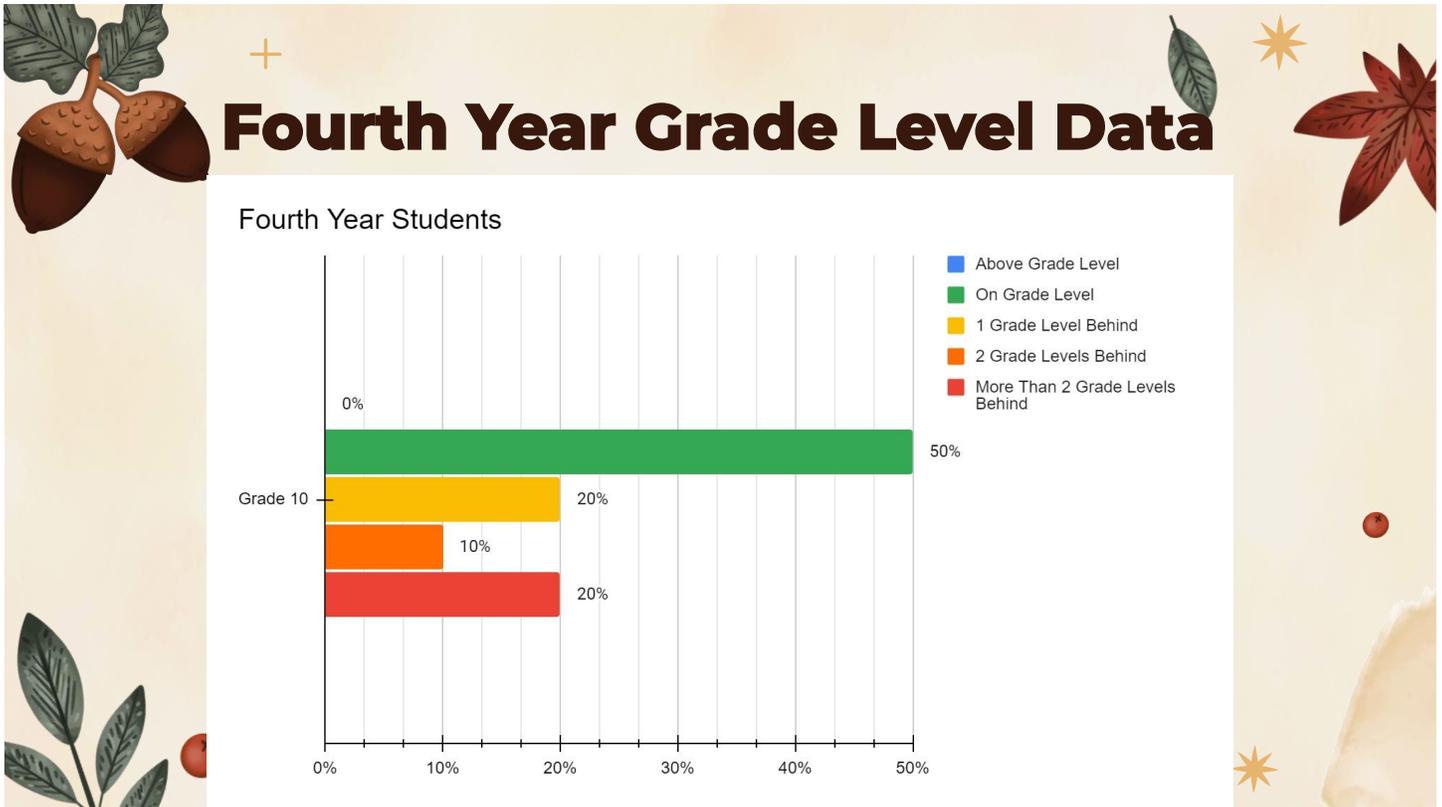
Second Year Students



# Third Year Grade Level Data

Third Year Student





Dr. O’Grady explained that the NWEA is norm referenced (national comparisons) and iReady is criterion referenced. iReady compares how a particular student is doing against the standard. Grades 7- 10 are evaluated using iReady.

Donna said that the information was fantastic. It was a lot of work to do.

Dr. Browne thanked Don and Lena because without the teacher buy-in we would not have this info. We had observed that incoming students from across the state have substantial academic needs. We had the tools in place to identify student needs and address them.

Susan expressed how great this was and that students were enrolling who did not like education. Teachers were making a difference by building relationships.

Dr. Browne provided an update on Charter Contract Renewal:

- MEVA’s quinquennial charter contract renewal is underway.
- Our public hearing is on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, via Zoom.
- The Maine Charter School Commission will vote at their October 8<sup>th</sup> business meeting.

Dr. Browne reported that the public hearing was scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. This was an opportunity for people to participate and speak about MEVA. The Maine Charter School Commission’s final vote was on October 8<sup>th</sup> at their business meeting.

Donna shared that based on what we hear there is positive feedback from the commission and that we must spend our money.

Enrollment Counts – 9/16/2024:

- MEVA is on track to attain our targeted enrollment for October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

- Our SY-2024/2025 goal is 460 – 470 students.
- Currently, we have a modest cushion to compensate for September withdrawals.
- MEVA’s enrollment cap is 450 plus ten percent (10%), or 495 students.

7th Grade	39
8th Grade	30
9th Grade	82
10th Grade	121
11th Grade	117
12th Grade	88
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>477</b>

**Governance.**

**Independent Third-Party Proposal.**

Cherieann asked if the budget has already been approved for the proposed two-year third-party evaluation. Dr. Browne said yes, it had been approved in the three-year financial plan already.

Tina motioned to approve the independent third-party evaluation proposal, for the next two years, to be presented in the fall of 2026, and to review recommendation progress. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

**Policies/Procedures:**

- B. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy.
- C. DJH Purchasing And Contracting: Procurement Staff Code Of Conduct Policy.
- D. DJ Bidding/Purchasing Policy.
- E. DJ-R Procurement Procedure.
- F. Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure.

Cherieann asked about the changes to the policies. Dr. Browne explained that some policies needed to be updated, and some are new that MEVA did not have. Tina said all these policies were standard requirements across schools. Cherieann asserted that she was going to abstain from voting on the policies, since she was not able to review them.

Stacey asked if MEVA validated the legal references at the bottom of the policies and requested to table them until next meeting, since she had not yet reviewed any of the policies. Donna said that there was a current motion on the table that needs to be resolved.

Tina motioned to approve B, C, D, and E. Susan seconded. Susan, Tina, and Donna in favor. Stacey not in favor. Cherieann abstained. So, moved.

Donna reported that someone from the public is asking what is in intellectual policy? Donna asked Dr. Browne to review.

Dr. Browne explained that if there was a question of employee ownership over something that was created at our school, using school resources, then it was illuminated that MEVA was the owner of that creation. The intellectual property policy and procedure was not a Maine schools' requirement. However, we needed clarification of ownership, so we obtained policy samples from the collegiate level. Faculty creations on work time belong to MEVA. This policy was to coincide with the collegiate research policy, to prevent teacher conflicts about their individual contributions, since MEVA asked staff to create a lot of materials. The policy supported our collaborate work environment. Stacey said this was standard, in a corporate environment. Dr. Browne shared that MEVA legal counsel reviewed the document and made a few recommendations to adjust.

Donna said in public school when teachers develop curriculum, and lesson plans, materials belong to the school department. She shared an example of a time she had a staff member who shut down all his curriculum work. The individual did this because they believed they owned it. The school was eventually able to retrieve it. Maine School Management had not seen the need to develop a policy that addressed this issue.

Dr. Browne reiterated that the policies aimed to protect people and to eliminate conflicts. Jillian needed clarification where it stated in the policy "on work time." What about college time? Dr. Browne stated, if MEVA was paying for the class, then it would fall under MEVA.

Tina motioned to approve the Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure. Susan seconded. All in favor, except for Cherieann, who abstained. So, moved.

### **Public Discussion.**

Gayle Langis, MEVA staff member, stated that she came to this meeting because she saw the agenda item, intellectual property policy. Gayle understood that course curriculum was black and white. However, in research when you conducted it, at least in college, there was shared ownership there. If faculty did research, they did have different rights. Taking courses at the collegiate level was different. Gayle expressed that she did not want MEVA to get into a mess in the future because we did not know what landmines were out there. There was no comment from the board on Gayle's feedback.

Stacey referred to the third-party evaluator's comment about outside events. Stacey mentioned pre-covid, MEVA had in person events. She asked if there were plans to restart the in-person events, gatherings, or in-person open houses. Dr. Browne stated, we still had open houses, but we did them virtually. It was an accessibility barrier with in-person events since we served the full state. Students located in southern Maine had more opportunities than those in the northern region. It was difficult to be equitable. MEVA recognized many had transportation issues or financial limitations. MEVA served quite a few economically disadvantaged students, typically, fifty-five percent (55%). Stacey said kids wanted a sense of belonging. She knew it was challenging for many people, but being offered an opportunity to meet their teachers in-person may help. Dr. Browne said students had an opportunity to meet teachers and peers at in-person state assessments.

Donna observed with MEVA's poverty level not everyone had the means to attend in-person events. Susan stated that Stacey made a good point, but maybe in person events were too much to manage. Susan suggested virtual fun night activities, nothing to do with academics, but to be able to see friends on a different note. Could this be explored?

Dr. Browne confirmed that the MEVA team would investigate and report back to the board next time about what we will offer.

Stacey expressed that there were frustrations within her network of parents and neighbors who attended MEVA.

Dr. Browne said we were not trying to duplicate brick-and-mortar schools. There were tradeoffs enrolling in virtual education; we cannot be all things to all people. What we did well was serving our students individually. Dr. Browne said we can consult our two guidance counselors who are experts in adolescent development to help develop ideas and plans.

**Adjournment.**

Susan motioned to adjourn. Cherieann seconded. So moved by Donna. The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne  
Secretary pro tempore