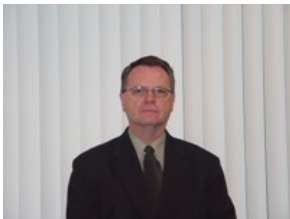


## The Top Ten Indicators of A GREAT Academy

Guest Article By *Lee Robinson, CSO Field Representative*



For the past 5 years, I have had the privilege to work with the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office. During these 5 years, I have had the fulfilling opportunity to visit and observe many public school academies in Michigan. As I enter my 35<sup>th</sup> year working in public education, I thought it might be interesting to share with you my personal opinion of the **TOP TEN INDICATORS OF A GREAT ACADEMY.**

**#10 In a GREAT Academy.** "The Business of the Business" is always centered on children, curriculum, instruction and achievement. In a GREAT Academy, the school "buzz" is consistently about teaching and learning.

**#9 In a GREAT Academy,** the Board of Directors and all employees understand the importance of modeling. In a GREAT academy, the board and staff model the 3 P's: Professionalism, Preparedness, and Problem Solving.

**#8 In a GREAT Academy,** assessment and research drive teaching and re-teaching. In a GREAT academy, staff development is a very high priority.

**#7 In a GREAT Academy,** the board and staff constantly identify gaps in achievement, facilities, curriculum, and instruction. In a GREAT academy, the board and staff have identified where they are and where they want to be. (conducted a "gap analysis" and have identified strategies)

**#6 In a GREAT Academy,** the School Improvement Plan is a "living," useful document that is part of the academy's Strategic Plan. In a GREAT academy, the board and staff know where they are going, and they have created a "roadmap" to get there.

**#5 In a GREAT Academy,**

the facility is safe, clean, bright, and conducive to teaching and learning. In a GREAT academy, the board and staff do not accept inadequate facilities.

**#4 In a GREAT Academy,** the Board of Directors has created and adopted district wide policies. In a GREAT academy, administrators create, publish, and use administrative guidelines and procedures.

**#3 In a GREAT Academy,** the Board of Directors and staff embrace accountability. In addition, every staff member, including the Educational Service Provider, is evaluated on a regular basis.

**#2 In a GREAT Academy,** the Board and staff do not make, nor accept, excuses. In a GREAT academy, the Board and staff identify gaps (versus making an excuse) and use a district wide problem solving model to close the identified gaps.

**And, the #1 Indicator of A GREAT Academy:** All staff and the board understand that the Academy exists for the children. In a GREAT academy, the board and staff make what is best for children the #1 priority-without exception.

### Special Points Of Interest

- CTA Students Assist After Katrina
- Francis Reh Offers Healthy Choices
- Michigan Teacher of the Year Nominations
- 2005 Shining Star Award Celebration



## Spotlight On Academies



### CTA Students Assist School Children after Katrina

Students in Karen Lenthe's 6th grade class recently filled and sent 9 backpacks to the Gulf coast for distribution to students after Hurricane Katrina. "I encourage each of my students to do some kind of community service", said Ms. Lenthe. "A couple of students came in and said they found this website called **dosomething.org**, and it had a program listed called "We've got your back." It was an opportunity to send school supplies and backpacks to students who had lost everything."

Students in the elementary grades were asked to help solicit contributions and according to Ms. Lenthe, the response was overwhelming. "We really stuffed those backpacks, we just had so many supplies." Students collected not only the standard school supplies, but also included gym clothes in the packs. The backpacks were sent to a collection point in Woodhaven, Michigan, and then transported to the Gulf Coast with

many other backpacks. "We have so much," said Ms. Lenthe, "I wanted students to realize how fortunate they are compared to those children, and in that regard, the project was successful."

*Students from Ms. Lenthe's class stock backpacks. L to R: Mercedes DeYoung, Emily Howard, Montanna Dodds*



### Francis Reh Offers Healthy Snack Alternatives

Many schools struggle to offer a healthy foods that are good, nutritious, and that students like to eat. That has not been so much of a challenge at Francis Reh Academy in Saginaw. For the past two years, Francis Reh has been the recipient of a federal grant to offer a fruit and vegetable snack program that encourages youngsters to eat more nutritiously and to try different produce.

"Kids love apples and pears, but we also serve strawberries and blueberries," explained Rose Schliska, the supervisor of meal preparation and menus at the academy. "We try to offer them different vegetables such as radishes, cherry tomatoes, zucchini, and squash. They're served in the classrooms, usually with a dip. They have to at least taste them." As a re-

sult, Schliska reports that many students are now snacking healthy, and enjoying new fruits and vegetables.

A revised school lunch law requires schools participating in the federally funded meal programs to implement policies that address physical education and nutrition by the 2006-2007 school year. Francis Reh Academy is already meeting those guidelines.



*Students at Francis Reh Academy wait in line for school lunch*

### Michigan Teacher Of The Year Nominations Sought

The Michigan Department of Education is looking for help identifying and recognizing Michigan's excellent teachers and the contributions they make to the success of the learning community.

The Department website provides a nomination form that makes it easy to tell a great teacher that his/her efforts are recognized and appreciated.

To access the form:

- Go to [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)
- Click on the Recognition Program link in the right margin
- Click on Michigan Teacher of the Year
- Complete the Nomination Form and submit

The deadline for submission is November 3, 2005



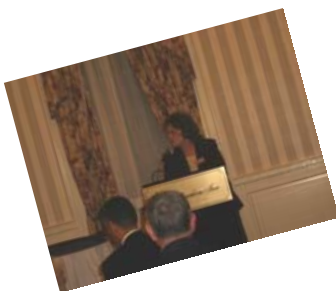
## Honoring 2005 Shining Stars



On October 7, the CSO had the opportunity to host members of the Boards of Directors, School Leaders from the 16 FSU –authorized academies, and other special guests at its **Fourth Annual Shining Star Awards Celebration**.

### The 2005 Shining Star Award winners are:

- Conner Creek Academy-East, *Roseville*
- Creative Technologies Academy, *Cedar Springs*
  - George Crockett Academy, *Detroit*
  - Hope of Detroit Academy, *Detroit*
  - Huron Academy, *Sterling Heights*
  - Joy Preparatory Academy, *Detroit*
  - Voyageur Academy, *Detroit*





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#### MAPSA Prepares For 8th Annual Conference

On October 27-28, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) will be hosting 2,000 charter educators and parents at this year's conference. The conference will be held at Cobo Hall.

"Excellence For Every Child" is why charter public schools exist. Charters are embraced because of their belief that every child can and will learn; they are applauded because they view excellence as the only option.

-Dan Quisenberry, MAPSA President

For information on the conference and to register, visit the MAPSA website at:

[www.charterschools.org](http://www.charterschools.org)

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Ferris State University will be a national leader in providing opportunities for innovative teaching in career oriented, technological and professional education.