

## From The Director's Desk . . .

### March Is Reading Month



All across our country, during the month of March, people are celebrating reading in a variety of ways.

From the earliest times of our history the commitment of our country's founding fathers to a literate populous was demonstrated through the establishment of schools, in various forms, in communities throughout the land. Today schools continue to thrive in diverse ways. Although the curriculum, instructional delivery methods and students have changed, the commitment to reading has remained strong. In the past, reading was essential to an emerging democracy. As the complexity of daily living has increased over time, reading as a building block for societal success is even more important. We all know it is a basis for the acquisition of knowledge. For individuals it is a pathway leading to personal success and gratification.

You are encouraged to participate in this celebration of reading. Teachers and all school employees are asked to model reading. Establish reading blocks of time where the entire school reads. Parents are asked to model reading for their children. Make sure that each child has a library card. Take quality time to read within the home. Each and every one of you is encouraged to participate in the March celebration of reading. In doing so, it is hoped that this activity will become a habit that is practiced throughout the year.



Lawrence V. Wells, Ph.D.

## FSU Board of Trustees Reauthorizes Four Academies and Authorizes New Academy

At their regular meeting on March 21, 2008, the Ferris State University Board of Trustees reauthorized four academies, and authorized the establishment of a new strict discipline academy. The four academies achieving reauthorization were:

- **New Bedford Academy** (Lambertville) Established in 1998, serving grades K-8. *Authorized for 5 years* (to 2013).
- **Francis Reh Public School** (Saginaw) Established in 1998, serving grades K-8. *Authorized for 3 years* (to 2011).
- **Pierre Toussaint Academy** (Detroit) Established in 1998, serving grades K-8. *Authorized for 5 years* (to 2013).
- **Allen Academy** (Detroit) Established in 1999, serving grades K-12. *Authorized for 7 years* (to 2015).

In addition, the FSU Board of Trustees approved the authorization of a new strict discipline academy to be named **Lighthouse Academy**. The academy will be housed on the campus of Wedgewood Christian Services and will operate as an independent entity on the campus. The academy anticipates opening in fall, 2008.

Each academy under consideration for reauthorization undergoes an intensive review and reauthorization visitation by the Charter Schools Office staff. Our congratulations to the academies who passed this review and our thanks for their cooperation and wonderful hospitality during the reviews!





## Hope of Detroit Places in Academic Games

The Hope of Detroit Academy Formula 5 Academic Games Team recently placed 3rd at the Michigan League of Academic Games Super Tournament held March 11-13 in Grand Rapids. The Academic Games is a series of competitions designed to test a student's knowledge in several subject areas including math, English, language arts, social studies, and logic. This year marked Hope's first entry into the event.

"We are extremely

proud that we were able to place in the top 5 in all of the games this year," said



Hope of Detroit's Formula 5 Academic Games Team: Lizabeth Leal, Guillermo Cruz, Giovannie Gonzalez, Miguel Rios, Jose Vera, and Coaches Manuel Rosales-Smith and April Jenkins.

AG Coach April Jenkins. "These students gave up one Saturday a month from September to January in order to compete at a local level and then regionals and State."

The Formula 5 team has begun its preparation for next year and has set a goal to win the competition. "The excitement generated by our 3rd place showing will only increase student participation and build school spirit around academic achievement", said Benny Cruz, HDA School Leader.

## Spring Academy Tour

Larry Wells and Mindy Britton of the FSU/CSO, accompanied by Mr. Ron Snead, FSU Board of Trustees member, recently toured Detroit Metropolitan FSU-authorized charter school academies. Mr. Snead expressed that he was proud of the unbelievable work that staff are doing and the accomplishments of their respective students. Mr. Snead observed firsthand the valuable services that the academies are providing to students at risk. He stated, "there is a personal touch and positive attitude that permeates each school. The discipline and manners of the students is noticeable upon entering each school." Mr. Snead plans to visit the remaining schools in the near future.



Dr. Nagj Abduljabber, Principal of Bridge Academy and Mr. Ron Snead, FSU Board of Trustees



Trustee Snead with Ms. Sarah Snyder's Kindergarten Class at Hope of Detroit Academy



Mr. Andrew Megel, 7th Grade Science, Joy Preparatory Academy



Mindy Britton, FSU CSO; Ron Snead, FSU Board of Trustees; Benny Cruz, Principal, Hope of Detroit; Ali Abdel, Assistant School Leader, HDA; Dr. Larry Wells, FSU/CSO

## Upcoming Spring Events

### CSO 6th Annual Spring Briefing

The CSO will be holding its 6th Annual Spring Briefing on May 1 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Dearborn. A number of topics important to Ferris-authorized academies will be on the agenda for discussion and presentation. In addition, Elizabeth Elliot from Michigan Virtual University will be a featured speaker sharing information about Michigan LearnPort. LearnPort is a web-based professional development delivery system where staff can earn SB-CEUS, meet professional development requirements, and find a wealth of resources.

Invitations for the Spring Briefing will be in the mail very soon. Please RSVP quickly so we can hold a spot for you!

### Charter School Board

#### Leadership Summit 2008

The Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers (MCCSA) will be holding a statewide summit on board leadership for charter schools on May 8, 2008 at the Lansing Center. All Board Presidents of charter schools in the State have been invited to attend this conference. The conference has been designed to concentrate on an in-depth exchange of ideas, challenges, and solutions related to charter school quality.

The keynote speaker for the summit will be D. Michael Abrashoff, former Navy Commander. The cost of the event is \$75. For more information contact the CSO or MCCSA at (517) 487-4848. Further information is also available at [info@mccsa.us](mailto:info@mccsa.us).



## School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

Academic Assessment Specialist

### Books, Books, Books, Books, Books and More and More Books,

Some of my favorite memories as a mother with each of my children was the time spent reading together and watching their love of the printed word grow. I especially remember my daughter's favorites: The Frog Prince, The Pokey Little Puppy, and The Tawny Scrawny Lion. I owe my knowledge of reptiles to my oldest son who liked anything about animals, especially dinosaurs, and snakes. His favorite Bible story was David and Goliath. Then there were the pirates. My youngest son really liked the "how it was made" or "how it works" books. I have visions of him sitting on the floor surrounded with the books from what we called the book closet. His love of reading really "accelerated" in sixth grade with the advent of the *Accelerated Reader* program.

Some of my favorite memories as Reading/Curriculum Director at Crossroads Charter Academy were of the celebrations during March is Reading Month. . . the favorite book characters, comfy reading days, favorite book displays, the reading contests using *Accelerated Reader* tests to accumulate points for a prize or watch an administrator do some unusual stunt. The conversations in the halls about books they were reading were the highlights of my days. **Students surrounded by books; what a wonderful sight!**

A quote from Michigan's Governor: "Acquiring a core of books, magazines, and reference materials is the first step in engaging students and mastering Michigan's learning requirements. **There is nothing like a challenging book to lift you up or take you to another world!**" (Good Morning OSI! March 10, 2008)

Let's surround our students with books!

Until next time. . .

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## Final Professional Learning Community (PLC) To Be Held April 29, 2008

The Final PLC for this school year will be held on April 29, in Ann Arbor at Weber's Inn. This is the fifth and final session held this year that has focused on "Assessment For Learning." Each participant received the book *Assessment For Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders* by Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, and Chappuis. The April 29th session will continue with both the "What" and the "How" of the work; topics for investigation will include:

- Using Conflict as a Resource in School Improvement Teams
- Revisiting "Unwrapping the Standards"
- The What and How of "Power Standards"
- Reporting on Student Achievement
- Celebrating our Learning



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### Save the Dates:

- Charter Schools Office **Fall Board Leadership Conference III** will be held at Ferris State University on September 12-13, 2008. More information and a full conference schedule will be mailed out in early August.
- The **2008 Shining Star Celebration** will be held Friday, October 5 at the Dearborn Inn. Invitations will go out in early September.

### FSU Mission

Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society.