

## New Beginnings

Welcome back to school! It seems that no matter how many years go by, for me the start of a new school year is always a special time because of the promise that a new beginning brings. It is a time for fresh starts, new opportunities, and the chance to build on past knowledge and experiences. This year marks my 25th year in the educational field, and I can honestly say that I still feel the same excitement I felt as a teacher, as an administrator, and now as the Interim Director of the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office. At the start of this year, I'd like to take a moment to revisit "The Three R's."

At the Governor's conference on education this past spring, Governor Granholm and State Superintendent of Instruction Mike Flannigan unveiled the new "Three R's" for the State of Michigan. The Three R's stand for *Relationships*, *Rigor*, and *Relevance*. What this boils down to is a basic approach that truly successful educators have known for many years: learning must be

engaged, meaningful, purposeful, *and* personal. As I sat in the audience listening to the Governor and State Superintendent speak, it occurred to me that my vision for the Charter Schools Office, and what this office has historically been about was very much in line with this premise.

**Relationships** Even though FSU is geographically removed from most of its academies, we visit each of our academies or attend a Board of Director's meeting an average of 10 times each year. The CSO staff has and will continue to travel many thousands of miles each year to insure that the FSU Charter Schools Office is not just some faceless organization up North, but consists of people, most of whom know each academy very well. To underscore this importance, our University President, Dr. David Eisler, has personally visited almost all of our academies in the past few years as well.

**Rigor** Every FSU-authorized academy must have an educational program that expects *AND* obtains high academic achievement from every student. The academy should be able to verify stu-

dent achievement through multiple sources of data.

**Relevance** FSU-authorized academies must be more than just an alternative to the traditional school, and must offer a "product" that parents and students cannot get elsewhere. That product must be competitive to the experience available in the local host district.

The CSO views its academies as partners, and it is my intention to see that we continue in this role. We want our authorized academies to succeed, and we will continue to offer appropriate assistance to help facilitate that success. I look forward to our continued work together at the start of this school year, and offer my best wishes for a successful start to the year for each of you!



*M. S. [Signature]*

### Special Points Of Interest

- Hope of Detroit and New City Academy reach Stage 2 of APG
- Dr. Crystal Kuykendall to speak at Shining Star Event
- CSO to host Fall Board Leadership Conference
- School Improvement Corner



## Spotlight On Academies



### New City and Hope Of Detroit Academies Progress To Stage II of 2006-2007 Academic Performance Grants Opportunity

Two FSU-authorized academies have progressed to stage 2 of the Charter Schools Office 2006-2007 Academic Performance Grant (APG) application. New City Academy (Lansing), and Hope of Detroit Academy (Detroit) have been awarded \$15,000 based on their Stage 1 application. The purpose of this years APG is to fund proposals which have the capability to significantly improve student achievement, and which can be disseminated and replicated when completed.



New City Academy Grant Team

Stage 1 proposals had to show strong inclusion of strands I, III, and V of the State School Improvement Framework. "Proposals had to bring to life the whole school improvement process," said Suz-

anne Finney, CSO Academic Assessment Specialist. "This really was a demonstration grant in that schools had to show the tie to the State framework."

"The \$15,000 is general money to move forward in the development of their Stage 2 grant proposal," said Finney. Each school is now eligible to apply for an additional \$185,000 to be awarded over the next three years, beginning in 2007. Interim Director Ronald Rizzo stated that, "We wanted to see what a concentrated grant



Hope of Detroit Grant Team

aimed specifically at the State School Improvement Framework could generate not only for their academies, but that could then be shared with others. Ferris State University is pleased to be able to offer these grants to the FSU charter school family."

### Dr. Crystal Kuykendall To Speak at 2006 Shining Star Celebration



The CSO is pleased to announce Dr. Crystal Kuykendall as the keynote speaker for the 2006 Shining Star Celebration. Dr. Kuykendall is a nationally recognized speaker and the author of several highly regarded books.

A former elementary and secondary public school teacher, Dr. Kuykendall has also taught at Seton Hall University and Montclair State University. She is the former Executive Director of the National Alliance of Black School Educators, and has served on the National Boards Association as Direc-

tor of Urban and Minority Relations. Dr. Kuykendall was appointed to the National Advisory Council on Continuing Education by President Jimmie Carter where she served as Chairperson from 1979-1981. She was chosen by Ebony Magazine as one of the "50 Leaders of the Future" in 1979.

The CSO is planning on a public forum for educators with Dr. Kuykendall from 4-5 on October 6 at the Dearborn Inn. Please contact the CSO if you are interested in attending this event (231/591-5802). There is no admission for the forum and all are welcome to attend.

*The Ferris State University Charter Schools Shining Star Celebration will be held on October 6, at the Dearborn Inn.*

## School Administrators and Teachers Go Back To School

### Before "Back To School" Begins

School leaders, curriculum directors, and selected teaching staff came to FSU on August 1 & 2nd to learn more about the **Scantron Performance Series** computer adaptive testing program. Participants had

hands-on experience as they learned about several new updates to the program, and new products such as the Scantron Achievement Series. Suzanne Finney, Academic Assessment Specialist, presented

the workshop held in the FSU FLITE building. The CSO wants to take this opportunity to thank all of the school staff who came to the workshop for their hard work during the sessions.



### CSO To Host Fall Board Leadership Conferences

In an effort to promote excellent public school academies through excellent Board leadership, the CSO is hosting two sections of a Board Leadership Conference this fall. Board Presidents and Vice-Presidents have been invited to attend either the session in Dearborn on September 8-9, or in Lansing on October 13-14.

**The conference will focus on the role of the Board in high student achievement.** Please call Sue at 231/591-5802 to register.



### School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

#### September. . . a New Beginning with a New Means

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, Hope of Detroit Academy and New City Academy School Improvement Teams attended the Stage II Workshop for the Competitive Academic Performance Grant here at the Charter Schools Office. As we worked together my sense of anticipation grew as it does whenever I am part of a group of educators who are going about the business of making a difference in students' lives. I have felt this same synergy as I have interacted with staff at the academies I have visited recently. The work of improving student achievement is not so labor intensive when specific goals are envisioned and shared. [Oops, I'm slipping back to that collaborative theme in the June article.] Back to this article... the topic creating the buzz is *Assessment* and the role it plays in bringing about Curriculum- Instruction- Assessment Alignment (Strand I, Standards 1, 2, 3 of the School Improvement Framework). What has been seen in the past as an end (assessment) is now the means. Quoting from Characteristic 2 of the Rubric for Standard 3: Assessment>Benchmark B> Data Reporting and Use: "Individual teachers as well as teacher teams continually assess their curricula and instructional practices and set goals that focus on revisions to school processes, curriculum, and instruction." Resources worth investigating include the *School Improvement Framework Rubrics for self Assessment* at [www.michigan.gov/schoolimprovement](http://www.michigan.gov/schoolimprovement) and *The Journal of the National Staff Development Council, Winter 2006* which is devoted to the topic.

Until Next Time . . .

CPD 1020 E. Maple Street  
Big Rapids, MI 49307-1676

Phone: (231) 591-5802  
Fax: (231) 796-1448  
Email: rizzor@ferris.edu

### New Staff at the CSO

The Charter Schools Office is pleased to announce two new staff members, and one new assignment. **Deborah Snider** has joined us a part time Clerical Assistant. Deborah will be handling accounts and purchasing for the CSO. **James Johnson** is a Graduate Assistant completing his Master of Arts degree in Education.

James will be working part-time and assisting with day to day operations and special projects. Former CSO Director **Jimmie Rodgers** is coming out of "retirement" and will be working with the CSO as the Consultant to the Dean for Special Projects.



Deborah Snider



James Johnson



Jimmie Rodgers

  
Ferris State University Charter Schools

Committed to Continuous Quality Improvement

For Michigan Public Schools

Visit Us At Our Website:

[www.ferris.edu/charterschools](http://www.ferris.edu/charterschools)

#### **FSU Mission**

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