

Clara B. Ford Academy Opens

Ferris State University is proud to announce the newest addition to the CSO family, the Clara B. Ford Academy (CBFA). The academy opened for the first time on September 4th.

Chartered by FSU as a Strict Discipline Academy, CBFA has 187 students enrolled in its inaugural class.

Due to its status as a strict discipline academy, students may only be enrolled if they are referred by area courts, juvenile justice authorities, and Department of Human Services organizations.

At a Board of Directors meeting on September 6, 2007, Michigan Supreme

Court Justice Maura Corrigan performed a ceremonial swearing in of Board members.

The Clara B. Ford Academy will be housed on the campus of Vista Maria in Dearborn. The school is part of the Village of Hope program set forth by the Vista Maria Board of Directors.



Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan swears in Board members.



CBFA Principal Michael Gray.



Vista Maria CEO Cameron Hosner addressed audience.

Professional Learning Community Dates Established

Suzanne Finney, CSO Academic Assessment Specialist, has established the dates for the 2007-2008 Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. All meetings will once again be held at Weber's Inn in Ann Arbor on the following dates:

11/6/07; 1/8/08; 2/12/08; 3/17/08; and 4/24/08. All school leaders and curriculum directors/assessment personnel will be receiving invitations.

"I'm really looking forward to continuing our journey toward improving our stu-

dents' learning," said Finney. Last year's PLC's were very successful from both a content and networking aspect. The attendees jointly crafted the following mission statement for the PLC:

"To provide interactive forum for professional collaboration around curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student learning."

CEU's will be offered for all sessions.

We hope you will attend these professional and thought-provoking sessions. Look for your invitation soon.



Dr. Lawrence Wells
CSO Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...

Challenges and Opportunities

This summer I had the opportunity to visit each FSU authorized academy. I observed facilities, met building leaders, met several Educational Service Provider (ESP) representatives, and attended some Board of Directors meetings. I'm pleased to say I observed many successes, some of which were outstanding.

Our schools are presented with many challenges that impact programs in a variety of ways. Upon careful examination, many of the identified challenges are also opportunities for improvement. Success goes to those who are prepared to act and seize the opportunity to meet life's challenges. Some of these challenges include, but are not limited to, the requirements of federal and state mandates, staff retention, Board governance and establishing a culture of continuous quality improvement. School culture is a distinguishing characteristic of the school. Establishing a school culture of continuous quality improvement is an essential element for a successful school. This is the mission of the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office. It is the driving force that permeates all that we do as an authorizer and is what we expect in the academies authorized by Ferris State University. Challenges encountered in establishing a school culture of continuous quality improvement include recruiting, hiring and retention of highly qualified and certified staff. Curriculum and instruction consistent with the state core curriculum's benchmarks and standards are indispensable. Data driven decision making is critical to successful instruction. As such it must be formative to allow for frequent assessment of instructional outcomes. This allows for adjustments in instruction to be made in response to student needs and to facilitate student success. The school facility must be a well structured, maintained, safe and inviting facility that is a pleasant place for teaching and learning.

Schools that are successful at providing programs that meet these needs and therefore facilitate student achievement will thrive. Schools that are unable or unwilling to establish opportunities with student success as a program outcome are destined for failure. The environment in which this scenario plays out is a dynamic one full of challenges and opportunities. What are some of the challenges and opportunities? What must be done to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities to achieve maximum benefit? The answers to these questions provide critical insight into the identification of pathways to success for schools and the children they serve. We will explore answers to these questions at our October Board Leadership Conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lawrence V. Wells".

Lawrence V. Wells, Ph.D.

School Leaders, Curriculum Directors, and Teachers Go Back To School

This summer, 50 staff members representing 16 Ferris–authorized academies attended an intensive four-day seminar on the Scantron Performance Series and the new Achievement Series. The CSO wishes to commend all who attended for their commitment, dedication, and hard work!



CSO Prepares for 6th Annual Shining Star Celebration

The Charter Schools Office will be holding its 6th Annual Shining Star Celebration on October 5th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Romulus. This year's event will feature Dr. David Pilgrim, Chief Diversity Officer from Ferris State University as the guest speaker. Dr. Pilgrim is an internationally known scholar for his development of the Jim Crow Museum on the FSU campus.

In 2000, the CSO launched the Compliance Incentive Fund program. The program was designed to financially reward the academies for complying with the office's requirements of compliance. Compliance refers to the on-time submission of a host of documents required by both the state and CSO. This year, schools with a compliance rate of 90% or higher will receive a check for up to \$5,000. Those with 100% will also receive the CSO Shining Star plaque.

Over the past several years, the Shining Star Celebration has turned into a celebration of the Charter School movement. This year's event

will also launch the first presentation of the Esther Simpson Award of Excellence. Named for recently retired CSO Compliance Officer Esther Simpson, the award will go to the one academy that in the view of the CSO staff represents the ideals of excellence in charter school compliance exemplified by Mrs. Simpson. RSVP's are due to the Charter School Office by September 21st. The chart below represents the compliance percentage increase over the next few years necessary to receive a check from the CSO:

Year	Compliance %
2007-2008	92%
2008-2009	94%
2009-2010	96%
2010-2011	98%
2011-2012	100%



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CSO To Host Fall Board Leadership Conference II

The CSO will be holding its 2nd Annual Fall Board Leadership Conference on October 19 & 20 at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing. Ann Fillingham from the Dykema law office in Lansing will be presenting a session on school building and renovation finance. In addition, there are four other sessions that have been developed from topics suggested by Board members such as:

- Boardmanship and Time Management
- Goal Setting and Strategic Planning
- School Improvement Frameworks for Boards
- Moving Forward

Please call Sue at 231/591-5802 to RSVP



Does your school have something special to share with other academies? We want to hear from you! Please forward articles and pictures for inclusion in the CSO newsletter to

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FSU Mission

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