

Another Year Goes Into The History Books!



Ronald Rizzo, Interim Director

Graduations. Concerts. Softball games. Class picnics. All-school Field Days. These are the unmistakable signs of not only Summer, but of the end of the school year as well. And what a year it has been!

As the Michigan charter school movement closes its 14th year, there are over 100,000 students and 5,000 teachers attending and working in Michigan charter schools. Michigan now has the 5th largest enrolment of charter school students in the nation. Demographics show that Michigan Public School Academies enroll over 50% African American students compared to the statewide average of 20%. A full 56% of charter students qualify for free or reduced lunch verses the 37%

State average. But enrollment alone is not a measure of a school's or movement's success.

The 2006 MEAP results show continued performance gains for charter school students with charters outperforming key comparative host districts in every subgroup in every subject on the MEAP test. Non-criteria referenced tests such as the Scantron Performance series test shows a higher percentage of students making one year or more of growth each academic year. Using student and class growth trajectory analysis aligned to the State standards teachers now have more benchmarks than ever to individualize curriculum and student instruction.

There are still many challenges for charter schools to overcome such as budget challenges, pressure from legislators, and the ever-raising bar of No

Child Left Behind. As I travel around the State visiting FSU-authorized academies and other State authorizers I am struck with the passion and commitment to the movement and the improvement of schools. I am confident that with our continued collaboration we will continue to see the movement and school achievement expand.

On a personal note, it has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as the Interim CSO Director this year. As Dr. Lawrence Wells assumes the Director's position, I shall return to my former position as Associate Director. I look forward to our continued work together on behalf of all the students who attend FSU-authorized academies, and to the greater charter school movement. Have a wonderful summer, take care, and we'll see you soon!

Special Points Of Interest

- Allen Academy Holds First Commencement
- New faces at CSO
- Curriculum Corner
- Schools Receive Skillman Grants
- Mark Your Calendar

Allen Academy Graduates First Senior Class

On June 4, 2007, Allen Academy graduated its first Senior Class. The commencement was held at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit with 19 graduates receiving their diplomas. Below are some snapshots of this very special occasion:



Congratulations Graduates!

New Charter Schools Staff

It is our pleasure to introduce you to our new CSO personnel :



Dr. Lawrence Wells

Dr. Lawrence Wells (Larry) is the new Director of the FSU Charter Schools Office. Larry holds degrees from Central State University, Ohio State University, and Michigan State University. He served the school district of the city of Saginaw for 30 years. Recently, he has served as an adjunct professor at Saginaw Valley State University. Mr. Wells is scheduled to begin on June 18.



Mindy Britton

Mindy Britton joined the CSO in mid May, and will be taking Esther Simpson's position as Compliance Auditor and Board Liaison. Mrs. Britton has been with FSU for 25 years, and has spent the previous 14 years in the Vice-President's office. Mindy will be transitioning with Esther Simpson until Esther's retirement at the end of June.



James Ridders

James Ridders (Jim) will be assuming the field representation of Joy Preparatory Academy and Bridge Academy, replacing Lee Robinson. Mr. Ridders comes to the CSO with a wealth of educational background including 20 years as a school Superintendent, and 12 additional years as a school administrator. Jim is currently serving as Director for the Kalamazoo RESA Leadership Institute.



Dr. Robert Hamet

Dr. Robert Hamet (Bob) will be replacing Lee Robinson as Field Representative at both Allen Academy and New Bedford Academy. Bob brings 25 years of experience as a school Superintendent to the CSO. Mr. Hamet has also taught Educational Leadership classes at Western Michigan University and has served as an adjunct staff member with the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Academies Receive Skillman Grants

Three FSU-authorized academies received news that they have been awarded grants by the Skillman Foundation. The academies are: George Crockett (\$25,000), Pierre Toussaint (\$15,000), and Allen Academy (\$10,000). Each school is located in Detroit and are managed by The Leona Group.

According to Mary Lou Van Antwerp, school leader at George Crockett, the grant is for three years, and is divided in to \$17,500 the first year; \$5,000 in the 2nd, and \$2,500 in the 3rd year. "Pierre Toussaint and Crockett received the grants for their status as an improving good school," said Van Antwerp. "We went through quite a process to apply for the grant with a great deal of documentation, and a site visit and review by people from the Skillman Foundation. Staff and parents were interviewed and had input into the application and the review process. We were all selected because of our elementary MEAP test scores."

Allen Academy was selected as an "aspiring

school", meaning that they did not quite meet the requirements that Crockett and Pierre Toussaint did, but they were close and show a great deal of promise in meeting those standards soon.

"Our staff are very excited," said Van Antwerp. "It's a wonderful feeling to know that people on the outside recognize all of the hard work of the staff." George Crockett staff will now be prioritizing their needs to implement a detailed budget as they begin to access the money and coordinate the grant with their school improvement plan.

Congratulations to Allen, George Crockett, and Pierre Toussaint Academies!



School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

Academic Assessment Specialist

Summer . . . Time to Relax, Reflect, and Rejuvenate

I talked to a friend of mine who is a retired school teacher and the mother of a school teacher. I asked her what she most enjoyed about retirement; her answer included time to relax and reflect. (I noticed that she looks younger too).

Then, as I reflected, I thought of all the pressure that is on school administrators and teachers to assure that all students are successful. Herein lies danger ... trying to do too much at one time and ending up stressed out and then burned out. Richard Elmore in *School Reform from the Inside Out* states: "The analogy that occurs to me is to extreme mountain climbing. A group of people are strategizing about an assault on a difficult 20,000 foot mountain. The goal is achievable only if each member of the group works at full physical and mental capacity, and only if the group fully develops its capacity to work *together* on the assault. Would any reasonable mountaineer argue that the best way to solve this problem would be for all members of the team to head straight up the mountain, as a group, in one continuous assault? This would be a formula for disaster; in fact, it is out of this kind of bravado that most mountain climbing disasters occur. No, what actually happens is that the assault is carefully staged in order to provide time for the group to pause, reconnoiter, pool its knowledge of the mountain, regain its physical capacity, regroup, and agree on a plan for the next phase. The more effective the group, the more skillful they are at finding and using these periods of consolidation. Groups that work this way are also called survivors."

Actually, Richard Elmore's book is a good one for School Improvement Team members to reflect with this summer. It is available through Harvard Education Press <http://www.hepg.org/main/hepg/Index.html> ISBN # 1-891792-24-5



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CSO Newsletter Takes Summer Off

The CSO newsletter will not be published during the months of July or August. We will see you in September with a fresh new look, and more information about the FSU Charter Schools and their accomplishments. Have a great summer!



Visit Us At Our Website:

www.ferris.edu/charterschools

Dates For Your Calendar

Below are some dates for your to mark on your calendar:

- October 5, 2007 **6th Annual Shining Star Celebration**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Romulus
- October 19-20, 2007 **Fall Board leadership Conference II**, Radisson Hotel, Lansing

FSU Mission

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