CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

360 Survey
NARRATIVE RESPONSES

Ferris State University
FERRIS FORWARD

2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 44</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 45</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 53</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 54</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 55</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Ferris State University - Charter Schools Office (FSU-CSO) recently conducted a survey (via EdConsult, LLC) of its progress toward implementing the principles and standards of effective charter school authorizers. There was a total of 93 respondents, of which 11 were internal FSU-CSO staff. The response rate was 41%. Due to the low number of respondents outside of the 4 main groups (i.e., the "Other" category), data for "Other" has been omitted from the "Relationship to FSU-CSO" charts throughout the rest of the survey after this page. The distribution of respondents by relationship to the FSU-CSO and years associated with the FSU-CSO can be found below. Board members were well-represented, but there was a diverse mix in both areas.

As it relates to narrative responses, the survey included 5 open-ended questions, specifically, questions 44, 45, 53, 54 and 55. Questions 44 and 45 were only available for CSO staff members to answer while questions 53, 54 and 55 were available for all respondents to answer. Open-ended questions allow respondents to include more information, including feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject. This allows the surveyor to better access the respondents' true feelings on an issue.

A sentiment analysis of all responses was conducted. Responses that were positive were coded as “1," neutral responses were coded “2” and negative response were coded “3” Based on this analysis, the majority of responses were positive (54%) followed by neutral (27%). Negative responses were the lowest (19%). When neutral responses are backed out, (74%) of the responses are positive while (26%) of the responses are negative.
Neutral Responses Included

- Positive: 54.00%
- Neutral: 27.00%
- Negative: 19.00%

Neutral Responses Excluded

- Positive: 74.00%
- Negative: 26.00%
What aspects of the CSO’s culture moves it towards fulfilling its mission?

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

- Consistent discussions regarding the mission and the development of a strategic plan to keep the CSO moving in the right direction
- Weekly emails and monthly meetings keep everyone on track.
- Visible Mission with occasional reference to it.
- N/A
- Collaboration between staff members.
- CSO staff have shared beliefs and values. We understand the end goal and work together to move our schools forward.
- Staff is encouraged to work as a team to help each other and our Academies.
- Strong sense of teamwork. Willingness to listen to staff input, suggestions and recommendations for improvements. Flexibility and support for building strong rapport and connections with academy leaders and board members.
- Strong focus on student success.
- Skilled staff who bring a wealth of experience to their positions.
What aspects of the CSO’s culture may be hindering fulfillment of its mission?

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

- FSU Education Department is of no help to the CSO or FSU authorized schools. Making available experts in classroom instruction, providing student teaching opportunities at authorized schools, and joint planning and workshops are just a few areas that would be helpful.
- Can’t think of cultural practices that hinder mission fulfillment. When “trouble” comes, the CSO leadership team immediately mobilizes its human and material resources to conduct interventions or suggest remedies to move forward. In most instances the local field representatives are included or kept informed of actions being taken.
- Not always listening or engaging comments from all members of the team.
- It can be challenging for off-site employees to interface with one another
- N/A
- Sometimes weak management companies.
- Not enough time to adequately spend in schools in distress
- Two members of CSO wield great power and influence over any decision.
- I can’t think of anything.

RELATIONSHIP TO FSU-CSO

CSO Staff Member 100%
Board Member 0%
Academy Staff 0%
Educational Service Provider 0%

YEARS ASSOCIATED WITH FSU-CSO

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<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 - 3</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>4 - 7</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 - 10</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>6%</td>
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In your own words, describe the CSO’s greatest areas of strength.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

- None at this time.
- Expertise
- Communication
- Accountability and assistance
- Available when needed
- Personable, supportive and visible staff that understands the reality in our schools and the obstacles it comes with.
- Personal relationships
- Always supportive
- Always friendly and supportive. Communication is timely and helpful.
- Leadership of the Director.
- I feel as the open opportunities for communication is a strength for the CSO. I can call or email any questions that I have and will receive a prompt response and support if required.
- The CSO is very supportive of our schools.
- Compliance
- Appreciate the support with data and using data to inform instruction.
- Ability to be flexible, innovative yet upholding high standards.
- Supportive and know their responsibilities.
- Ability to see the individual struggles and challenges of school and offer support for innovation.
- I believe FSU’s greatest strength is in its outreach to the school. Our local representative is present at nearly all Board meetings and works in collaboration with the admin to help provide opportunities for the students.
- Communication is their greatest strength.
- Great at supporting and advising school leadership without interfering in internal decision-making processes.
- Greatest area of strength is adequately informing the board of all requirements.
- Monitoring of data and providing feedback
- The authorizing process is the greatest area strength.
- I like that members of the CSO attend our Board meetings each month and are actively engaged in the process and the betterment of our school.
- The staff seems to be of very high quality with a lot of real world experience, which allows them to be pragmatic in their approaches.
- Effective quality control and monitoring of administrative process
- Upholding standards and having a positive proactive work environment is key for continuing to operate successful. Communication is above and beyond expectation when it comes to areas of strength. The Board is always kept abreast of the quality education that is being taught through the agency.
- Open communication
- Oversight and accountability
- Oversight of all components affiliated with our school.
- Commitment to excellence; support of Charter Schools
- Assistance
- They communicate well with the board.
- Student achievements in higher education standard
- The continuity provided by Dr. Rizzo’s longevity in the CSO.
- NA
- N/A
• Communication and expectation of timely responses to issues that arise regarding the school or its students.
• They are supportive but not overbearing. We have a great rapport with our representative and know that the CSO will rally behind us to work toward a mutual goal of providing a successful education for every student enrolled in our charter school.
• The representative is at all our board meetings. She is pleasant, informative and very supportive and encouraging.
• The CSO provides experienced educators who serve as consultants for our school. The CSO is willing to recognize our school's autonomy and still govern within the rules, regulations, and requirements.
• N/A
• Growth oriented and quality staff
• Continuous contact with their field rep, who is wonderful
• I think data gathering is important so that we can see where we are and know what next steps to take for improvement well in advance of any evaluations, restrictions or possible probation. It allows for proactiveness and a reality check.
• Accessibility open lines of communication
• Collaborative, competent, honest leadership and personnel.
• Encouragement per contractual areas.
• No response
• Organization
• The greatest strength is the commitment of the CSO to continually look at ways to improve its processes and procedures through the lens of making sure it is in the best interest of the schools and most importantly for the students who attend the schools. The team works very well together.
• Leadership, listening to all stakeholders, regular communication, and positivity are the strengths of the CSO.
• The CSO employs staff that is knowledgeable in their field
• N/A
• Support system provided to schools.
• Committed and caring staff
• Strong, experienced, and committed staff.
• Shared beliefs toward a common goal, quality initiatives are in place, many opportunities for professional growth and development.
• The CSO develops positive relationships with the academies which provides opportunity for open dialogue. The CSO continues to work within the changing school environment to determine how to best help the Academies to be successful.
• Being proactive in monitoring and responding to state, federal and regional directives, initiatives and/or challenges. Being willing to listen to issues or concerns from stakeholders and working cooperatively to help address, tackle and turn “problems” into opportunities.
• FSU has strong relationships, professional development offerings, and compliance.
• It is a pleasure to work with FSU and I appreciate their partnership.
• Very knowledgeable
• Strong, caring leadership at the CSO main office without “micro-managing.”
• Ferris CSO is a genuine partner, which does not engage in a practice of “gotcha”. They are supportive without being micro-managers and seem to truly care about the bigger picture.
• Active involvement with the charter schools that it charters.
• The CSO office is responsive, approachable and exemplifies the qualities of a true partner in providing quality education to students.
• Mission driven to help those most at risk.
• The CSOs greatest asset is its staff. The staff are personable while being clear about their role and the expectations they have of the academies.
• Providing support in a collaborative manner
• The CSO recognizes differences in their schools and employs a differentiated authorizing approach.
• They care deeply about the success of a school as a whole and the people who make up the school community. They are strengtheners.
• Dr. Rizzo is an effective leader.
• The FSU-CSO is thoughtful in new academy applications, reasonable with compliance requirements, and responsive to the needs of schools.
• FSU is indeed a partner in education. They work with their schools in making sure that they operate at a high level.
• A support system
• FSU CSO is very good at scheduling meetings with school stakeholders (school leaders, management company members, board members and CSO members) to discuss initiatives that will help better serve school community.
• The compliance officer (Sharon Hopper) is great to work with, she understands all sides of compliance and is a great help to the ESP and academies. The new addition of Michele Siderman has been a benefit to the FSU team. She is not afraid to speak at board meetings and will always give direction when needed.
• Supportive and knowledgeable. Ability to personally communicate on complex issues.
• I enjoy working with FSU, directions and expectations are clear. If there is a question FSU is very responsive.
• Liaisons
• Care about their students and their education
In your own words, describe areas in which the CSO can improve.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

- None at this time.
- Reduce the amount of reports required that are not needed (example is the testing schedule - of course we're going to test. Making that schedule is a waste of my time).
- Clarity to assist in compliance
- Flexibility
- If you want the best schools are you the best CSO? How do you compare to what other CSO's offer their schools?
- Providing more financial support in the areas of higher education or teacher retention.
- ESL and SPED support.
- Nothing
- Having a mid-contract review and contract review within the same 12 month period is not productive. Pulls time away from school leaders to focus on the school.
- N/A
- Communication of data. The format in which data has changed as well as the data being used for calculations. This change wasn't communicated in advance nor was the new calculation method. A school leader should be able to calculate their data with given calculations (in the past, we were told which report and what data set), not have to wait until FSU releases it.
- More clear guidelines and expectations
- NA
- I think FSU has been very supportive and helpful in helping us to meet our academic achievement goals.
- Providing some IT resources for schools doing research
- Nothing
- Would like technical assistance with data analysis
- I feel that the CSO could have more influence over management companies in ensuring that the school is able to maintain their own direction without being pressured into practices that are seen as having minimal value to the education of their students.
- Not aware of any at this time.
- None
- None
- Consult with school leader on methodology, strategies and approach to parents for effective communication and results
- Not sure. I'm too new to the process to evaluate
- I haven't been involved long enough to give a thoughtful answer to this question.
- As a newer board member, I don't really have too much experience with the CSO, so I can't really comment on this. One minor area is education for board members on exactly what the CSO's role is, and how we can work effectively as a board member to help the school and the CSO achieve their goals.
- Dissemination of information to stakeholders about school activities and academic progress.
- Not an area that I can think of that needs improving. But just an observation... Continue to work diligently together towards the same goal of partnering with systems that will help the families and students become successful
- Can't think of anything
- None
- Currently, I can not think of any area for improvement.
- I don't have any specific suggestion. I appreciate the CSO's on-going efforts to build supportive relationships with their Charter Schools while also requiring appropriate accountability of the schools.
- More frequent visits
- I don't think there is anything to improve.
- Not sure
- None
- More visits on a regular basis.
None
Can’t think of any.
I’m not saying they haven’t tried but whatever steps they can take to get our governor to provide funds to support our charter schools. This will give our teachers and staff the assurance that all their hardwork is not in vain.
I am very pleased that communication with the entire CSO has improved.
N/A
Continue to help with data analytics and insights on talent retention.
School Board relations by offering virtual meetings. This would help to increase board membership.
I would like to see more remote professional development opportunities for board members.
I have no areas at this time that I can think of adding, none of which I am aware.
Get the MDE and educational authorities to be more reasonable and predictable. Seriously, the CSO does as well as they can with the bureaucracy.
None
Does not do a good job setting or explaining goals.
Communication
The CSO can continue to look at ways to better define the roles of the team when it comes to school support.
N/A
Communication, not sure that communication is two ways with Field Reps. Meetings are very sit and get. There is no methods to engage staff is conversation.
N/A
Continued support for troubled schools and students.
Tuition reimbursement Coaching
We should continue to become helpful with our urban/low income schools and the teaching of math. Would be nice to have a person or two (FSU Dept of Educ.?) who we can use as a regular consultant or presenter.
Duplicating high performing academies, or mimicking areas of success. Continuing to seek out partnerships.
The CSO can improve by continuing to seek and implement best authorizes practices. Continue to determine how to provide differentiated over site.
1. Per comments from local board stakeholders - there’s interest in participating in more evening face-to-face professional development opportunities where they can meet and network with others from around the state. The webinars are helpful - but occasional dinner board symposia and other interactive sessions are valuable. 2. For our lowest performing schools, offering “Best Practice” Forums on effective curriculum, instruction and test-taking strategies (from successful “turn-around” educators would be welcomed by local academy professional and paraprofessional staff. Academies do well when they work with populations from stable homes with education-rich resources and experiences. They need to hear and see from educators in challenging communities (traditional or charter schools) who can provide concrete examples and strategies that generate significant achievement gains.
FSU overall is doing very well, if there was any one area to improve it would be ongoing written communication.
Perhaps increase staffing levels.
Better infrastructure knowledge
On the administrative end, I am very happy with the CSO office. Perhaps they could be of more help in the marketing of the schools.
None at this time.
More clearly spell out expectations where goals have not been achieved.
Less Bureaucracy
NA
Clearer in the “in between” years between contract extensions about areas which may need to be improved, especially in the area of student achievement targets. This has improved over the past year or so.
Have no suggestions at this time.
None
We appreciate that the CSO has moved away from a focus on compliance and to a focus on school quality while remaining compliant. The CSO staff is a joy to work with and know. The CSO now feels like a partner rather than a heavy hand.
- Ron Schnider is an incompetent blowhard.
- None
- Compliance bureaucracy. Some things we are required to submit for compliance are a bit over the top. Ex. Board moved their meeting time up one hour, we had to submit a special meetings notice, a new calendar, and a new agenda, etc.
- Data
- Sometimes the data analysis that we receive has errors and doesn’t always come in a timely fashion. It would be nice to receive data that is more comprehensive and if the data manager carved out time to meet with SIP teams to help aggregate data that supports school programs.
- The CSO could improve on being proactive when it comes to troublesome board members.
- I appreciate the thoughtful effort FSU makes in balancing the need/want for compliance related information from the academy with the time consuming burden associated with the request.
- None
- None
- Improve teacher/parent relation

**RELATIONSHIP TO FSU-CSO**

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<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Service Provider</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academy Staff</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO Staff Member</td>
<td>12%</td>
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**YEARS ASSOCIATED WITH FSU-CSO**

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<td>8 - 10</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>28%</td>
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Additional Comments

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

- I am fairly new to the company and I am in the early stages of learning our CSO and their beliefs and values.
- Like the training offerings.
- None at this time
- If keeping up with other CSO's, and striving to be the best in the state, we need to stay competitive with what we offer our schools.
- N/A
- None at this time
- NA
- Ron Rizzo has created a culture in his office where staff are extremely helpful and supportive to our needs. He is approachable and willing to listen, problem solve, and provide needed flexibility to meet the needs of our students.
- Thank you
- Ferris CSO has high standards yet flexible to meet individual needs.
- None
- None
- None
- As each school has various needs and personality, CSO must select school leader whose personality blends with the school's students, staff and parents. If this does not happen, parents will transfer their students and staff will leave.
- None
- Overall, I think Ferris State COS office is doing an excellent job!
- N/A
- None
- CSO does a fine job.
- I value having Ferris as our authorizer.
- Thanks
- Its been a long and fruitful relationship
- None
- None.
- None at this time.
- We are most appreciative that the CSO was patient with our school, management company, and board as we developed. It is because of Ferris State's CSO, we are able to give children a second chance and make them high school graduates and good citizens.
- N/A
- Over all quality and relationships are solid.
- The Ferris CSO is professional, balanced, fair, and helpful.
- We have a great relationship
• I believe that FSU’s CSO staff is committed to finding the best ways to support, invigorate and inspire high performance in academic, assessment and cultural areas. We may need to diagnose the highest learning deficits revealed on standardized assessments and conduct targeted work sessions with groups of academies over a one week period. 3. Once successful “turn-around” academies or schools have been identified (in Michigan or other states) the CSO may want to consider funding a “How We Did It” type photo documentary that chronicles steps taken to move a school from “bottom of the barrel” to successful “top of the hill” sustainable achievement.

• None at this time.
• The Ferris State charter school office staff are wonderful to work with.
• We appreciate the support and intervention provided when the school is challenged with governance situations that distract from the overall goals of the school
• Thanks!
• None
• I appreciate the candid conversations that we have which truly allow us to be self reflective.
• None

### RELATIONSHIP TO FSU-CSO

- **Board Member**: 51%
- **Academy Staff**: 27%
- **Educational Service Provider**: 19%
- **CSO Staff Member**: 3%

### YEARS ASSOCIATED WITH FSU-CSO

- 0 - 3: 27%
- 4 - 7: 30%
- 8 - 10: 16%
- 10+: 27%
Notes