

Report: Reauthorization Review Visitation
Academy: Michigan Connections Academy
Date: November 8-9, 2017

The visitation occurred at the Michigan Connections Academy Campus with three members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) visitation team. The team had the opportunity to meet with and interview the school leadership team, two school board members and the School Improvement Team. The team was able to tour the facility and visit several classrooms to observe teaching and learning. We appreciate the open communication and transparency that was apparent with all we were able to interact with.

Visitation Findings

School Improvement Plan (SIP) and EdYes! School Systems Review	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<p>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Improvement Plan is well organized and sufficiently detailed in regard to what strategies are expected to happen. • System wide protocols are aligned with the SIP (PLC Process, Intervention Systems, Formative Assessments, etc.). • The School Improvement Team collaborates effectively. • The staff is actively engaged and invested in the success of the SIP. • Rigorous and regular reviews are in place to: assess progress to goals, make adjustments to strategies as needed, and guide systematic professional development, support, and monitoring efforts. 	<p>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor the implementation of Tier II and Tier III strategies and adjust as needed. • Continue to identify appropriate PDs and Supplemental Instructional Support Programs (SISPs) to support Science and Social Studies, in addition to Math and ELA. • Continue efforts to engage parents and increase parental involvement through bi-weekly calls, usage of the Learning Management System, field trips, etc.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SIT has, and uses on-demand access to a comprehensive set of disaggregated data to identify and monitor key school-wide priorities for instructional improvement that become a foundation for the SIP. <p>Ed Yes! School Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is sufficient documentation to clearly support all evidences in this report. A review of this document shows a clear process is in place at the academy to help all students to reach high levels of academic achievement. 	<p>Ed Yes! School Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time.
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Facilities Review

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility is very neat, clean, and secure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time.

Academy Culture Review

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All adults display an unwavering belief in the potential of all students. This belief is codified and expressed in the daily routines of the school. There is a strong culture of trust, teachers have the freedom to coordinate their own schedules and organize their day to best meet the needs of their students and themselves. School leaders are highly respected by the staff. They work diligently to create a scholarly work environment that supports and prioritizes collaboration, values teacher input, and encourages new ideas and risk taking. School leaders and staff ensure that all students who are struggling academically and/or socially receive quality and integrated support services; positive results from such programs are clear. Staff members are continuously engaged in inquiry related to instructional improvement. Teachers have ongoing consistent and sufficient time for grade/content meetings, as well as vertical staff collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time.

<u>Mission Accomplishment</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school community demonstrates commitment to the school mission, vision, and core beliefs through behaviors and actions consistent with the mission. • It is evident from the school leaders, board, and teachers that individualized student learning is a core value, embedded in the daily practices and decision making. • The staff is driven by the “connections” they make, and maintain a very strong desire to build positive relationships that help each student maximize their learning potential. • There is full participation of all stakeholders pointed to the success of all students. • Bryan and his team are laser focused on the mission and vision. • What drives the academy is the goal of putting the students first. They go above and beyond what a traditional environment is capable of producing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time.
<u>Website</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website appears to be up-to-date and informative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time.

Academy Internal Review

<u>Student Outcomes</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leaders are well aware of what the student achievement data indicates, and are continually driving efforts towards high student achievement. • Bi-weekly calls to assess student progress through goal setting and progress monitoring, provide meaningful interactions which have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor the effectiveness of Tier II and Tier III interventions and modify MTSS process as needed. • Continue to engage your staff in curriculum and assessment audits to validate their effectiveness and impact on student outcomes.

<p>positively impacted student relationships and overall learning outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going curriculum alignment provides clear direction for teachers and ensures that outcomes are based on state content expectations. • School-wide implementation of “Visible Learning” has increased student participation and ownership of learning through goal setting, action plans, and teacher feedback. • Instruction priorities such as Foundations of Math (FOM) and Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators (FAME) indicate teacher progress and a positive impact on student outcomes. • Students who are not mastering lesson objectives are quickly identified and provided additional instructional supports until they achieve mastery. • Teachers utilize multiple methods for students to demonstrate mastery of challenging material including “Need to know” recordings, Break-out Rooms, SISPs, portfolios, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue your efforts to work with your local ISD’s to provide available services and resources to help meet student needs.
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Governance and Leadership

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board clearly understands their roles, as well as those of the ESP. • The board members are very committed to the success of the students. • The board is well informed and actively participates in professional development opportunities. • The board recognizes and appreciates the fact that MICA’s staff put their students’ education first. • The board is very invested in the development of the budget and committed to putting the needs of the students first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the management company to develop a budget that works to provide for the needs of the students. • With the elimination of the deficit protection plan, continue to monitor and develop the fund balance.

Resources and Support Systems

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have access to appropriate 21st Century resources, materials, and equipment aligned to the Standards and school improvement plan. • Connections Academy provides a data management system with analytic tools which allows teachers to: gain insight into how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with MICA to provide the best programs to meet their students’ needs as determined by staff input and data information.

<p>students are performing, design ongoing instruction, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections Academy has provided a model of on-line learning that is well thought out and working well. They continue to support what is needed to continue progress. 	
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CSO Review of Overall Performance for Michigan Connections Academy

<u>Contract Performance Report Review</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSTEP growth is above 40% in all areas and averages 59% in ELA and 54% in math • MSTEP proficiencies are excellent- ELA 59% (highest in FSU portfolio) and 32% in math (3rd highest in FSU portfolio) and they exceed their Composite District averages in all subject areas • SAT total average score improved from 2016 (956) to 2017 (971) • MAP Achievement average exceeds the 50th % goal in Reading • Compliance was at 100% • 0 Board vacancies during 2016-17 • Enrollment solid and steady- should have large numbers of current 8th- 11th grade students. Good opportunity to check retention data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low MAP Conditional Growth Percentiles- met the CSO target (at or above the 50th percentile) in only 3/18 measures in reading and math • MAP Achievement average does not meet the CSO target of the average ranking being at or above the 50th national percentile in math • MICA is getting closer to the state average total score on the SAT- good goal for the school (Michigan SAT average was 1008 in 2017) • In 2016-17, 81% of students were enrolled for three years or less and 43% had only been at MICA for one year. Continue to monitor student retention data. The longer you retain students the better.
<u>School Support Team (SST) Updates</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MICA is a “Green” designated school for 2017-18 • Consistent administration and Board have provided excellent leadership • Administration and staff work collaboratively to analyze data, identify areas of need, and propose solutions • There is full implementation of district wide initiatives (Visible Learning, Foundations of Math, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP growth • Retention of students • Continue to address math performance

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive working environment with an emphasis on high expectations and student achievement• Effective use of available resources and support staff | |
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Overall Opportunities for Growth

- Improve MAP growth data

Current CSO Expectations in Consideration for Recommendation of Reauthorization. These are subject to change.

For: Michigan Connections Academy

- Meet or exceed FSU CSO's academic measures and goals
- Continue to follow all charter contractual expectations
- The CSO may have other academic and non-academic expectations as more information becomes available. All other contractual and policy standards must be met and maintained.
- Not be named as a low-performing, Partnership, Comprehensive Support, etc. school by the State of Michigan

Signed James K. Scholten
CSO Visitation Chair

Ronald S. Schneider
CSO Associate Director