

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

December 2025 Board Communication

❖ Board Meeting Attendance and Participation

The board, as a whole, is responsible for the governance of a multi-million dollar public organization, as well as making critical decisions that affect the education of the children in their community. Since public board meetings are the only forum during which the board can discuss and vote on major school policies and decisions, it is important to remember that individual board member attendance and meeting preparation are critical to good governance.

The number of meetings scheduled, cancelled and held, along with overall board member attendance percentage are compiled and reported in the academy's annual Contract Performance Report.

With the input of each board member and others, the board determines its annual calendar at their yearly organizational meeting. Therefore, it is expected that board members are fully committed to attending every scheduled meeting, unless an emergency situation arises. The business of the school can only take place at a public meeting and board members must be there to fulfill their fiduciary duties.

Admittedly, to have strategic discussions at board meetings, board members must read relevant materials and come to meetings prepared to engage in discussions and ask relevant questions to make well-informed decisions. This can only happen if board members review the board packet in advance of the meeting.

Too much valuable board meeting time is often wasted when board members are reading the board packet for the first time during the meeting. Unprepared board members hinder meaningful discussions that lead to fact-based, data-driven board decisions.

We truly appreciate your genuine desire to serve your community and have an impact on the education of current and future generations. Your commitment to thoughtful, sincere and intentional governance can influence the school's fiscal health, establish a rigorous culture of learning and create an expectation of high academic standards for all students.

❖ Quorum Outside of a Board Meeting

We all know what constitutes a quorum at a public meeting. For instance, if your board consists of five board member positions, then three board members present are a quorum and if your board consists of seven board member positions, then four board members present are a quorum. But can a quorum of the board gather outside an open meeting without violating the Open Meetings Act?

Yes, a quorum of board members may assemble, without a public meeting, under the following circumstances:

- **Social Gathering**
 - A quorum or more may attend the same social or community event.
 - No discussion of Academy/Board business may occur and no decisions made.

- For example, a quorum or more are at a local festival. This would be an event that the board members are attending as community members, but are not “wearing their board member hat.”
- **Educational Session or Conference**
 - A quorum or more may attend an instructional session or professional conference where other people are also attending to learn about or obtain information about a topic.
 - No discussion of Academy/Board business or issues specific to their Academy/Board can be discussed and no decisions made.
 - For example, a quorum or more may attend a professional conference or any other training or informational sessions of use to board members, in general. However, training provided to a specific board must be presented in a public meeting.
- **Attending a Meeting or Presentation of a Civic Organization**
 - A quorum or more may attend.
 - No discussion of Academy/Board business may occur and no decisions made.
 - For example, a quorum or more attend a presentation facilitated by the local Rotary Club.
- **Attending a Public Meeting of Another Public Body**
 - A quorum or more may attend.
 - No discussion of Academy/Board business may occur and no decisions made.
 - For example, a quorum or more attend a city council meeting.
- **Chance Gathering**
 - For example, a quorum or more run into each other at a restaurant or grocery store, and no discussion of Academy/Board business may occur and no decisions made.

❖ **Virtual Board Professional Development Opportunities**

Mark your calendar for the next webinar in the 2025-2026 board professional development series, ***Governance Growth: Strengthening Boards, Empowering Schools***. This session, ***Data-Driven Governance for Student Achievement***, is scheduled for Tuesday December 9th at 7pm. The facilitator will help board members focus on understanding academic performance data, asking the right questions and using data to support student success. To register for this session, board members look for an email invitation from AirWin Educational Services with registration information.

In case you missed the September and/or October virtual board professional development sessions, below are links to the recordings. If you would like a copy of a presentation or handouts, please contact Sharon Hopper at SharonHopper@ferris.edu.

[Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member](#)

[Leading with Purpose: Mission -Driven Decision-Making](#)

❖ **Important Dates**

December 9, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar Data-Driven Governance for Student Achievement

December 11, 2025 – FSU Board of Trustees Meeting

❖ Did You Know?

The Michigan Open Meetings Act states:

- ★ The board meeting calendar must be posted at the school.
- ★ The public notice of each individual meeting must be posted at the school.
- ★ A closed session is only permitted for specifically defined purposes.
- ★ No one may be required to register or otherwise provide their name to attend a public meeting.
- ★ A board may adopt a rule imposing individual time limits for members of the public to address the board.
- ★ The public has the right to tape-record, videotape, broadcast on live TV or radio the board meeting.
- ★ Proposed board meeting minutes must be made available for public inspection within eight days of the meeting.
- ★ Approved board meeting minutes must be made available for public inspection within five days after the board approves the minutes.

❖ Board of Directors Question Toolbox

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office is happy to provide you with a few questions to help further your conversations this month. The question focus could come from one or more of our four School Support Pillars: Academics, Fiscal, Operations, and Compliance.

Please note that this is meant as a reference, some items may not apply to all schools, and that there are many questions a board member may choose to ask. If you have questions, please reach out to your Field Representative or the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office.

We will focus on Pillar #1 Academics:

- Are students making expected annual growth in reading compared to their peers? In math?
- Are students achieving proficiency on a nationally normed assessment in ELA? In math?
- How are we supporting students' social and emotional learning?
- How do we collaborate with our parents to support student success?
- Are students performing well on state examinations in comparison to students in schools they might otherwise attend?

Any Questions?

You may contact your FSU Field Representative or Sharon Hopper if you have any questions regarding this Board Communication. Important and/or urgent information that cannot wait until the next Board Communication will be sent to you by email.