

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

January 2023 Board Communication

❖ January is National School Board Appreciation Month

This month is a time to reflect on the vital work school boards do, and thank all board members for their unwavering commitment to their community and its children. We recognize the contributions of our board members, and focus attention on the crucial role these unpaid public officials who make decisions that affect the education of our children.

The CSO sincerely thanks all board members for unselfishly contributing your time, knowledge and expertise. You volunteer countless hours and an immeasurable amount of dedication, thoughtful discussion and grounded decision making to ensure that our schools are providing the best education possible for the children in their community.

Last year the 18 FSU-authorized academies were governed by 111 board members, with 912 years of combined years of school board service. Ferris State University thanks you for your leadership, service and continued commitment to ensure the children in your community receive the education they deserve!

❖ Fiscal Performance & Accountability Scorecard

In an upcoming board meeting, your Ferris State University Charter Schools Office Field Representative will be presenting your academy's Audited Financial Statement (AFS) Fiscal Performance & Accountability Scorecard. The purpose behind the scorecard is twofold:

- (1) To enhance FSU CSO fiscal oversight using a systematic approach and
- (2) To communicate transparently to boards the fiscal health of the academy in order to prompt conversation around finance.

If you have any questions after the presentation of your academy's scorecard, please feel free to contact Dr. Christopher White at (231) 591-5803 or ChrisWhite@ferris.edu.

❖ Budget Amendments

If your board has not yet done so, January is a good time for a board to adopt an updated budget. By this time in the year, revenue from student count is set. All other revenue and expenses should now be able to be predicted with much more accuracy than calculations used in June. Adopting an amended budget is especially important if pupil count was lower or higher than expected. As a reminder, prior to adopting any budget, all board members should have the opportunity to review the changes in detail and ask any questions. It is also best practice to think about how any additional expenses are helping the academy achieve its mission.

❖ 2022-2023 CSO Competitive Grants Program

The CSO received grant applications from 18 of the 19 FSU-authorized academies for the CSO Competitive Grants Program. While the program had a limit of \$200,000 to award, the CSO received a combined request amount of \$358,000. Therefore, the CSO had to make decisions about how to distribute the funds in a fair and equitable manner. It was important to the CSO that each applicant receive a portion of the grant. Below is the breakdown of grant awards.

In December 2022 the CSO processed a supplemental payment in the award amount, prior to the normal State Aid payment at the end of December. By June 30, 2023 the academy is required to submit in Epicenter verification and certification that the award amount was spent on its intended purpose.

Academy	Award Amount	Intended Purpose
Battle Creek Montessori Academy	\$10,000	Arts Instruction Staff/Equipment
Benton Harbor Charter School Academy	\$10,500	8 th Grade Trip to Washington, D.C.
Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School	\$8,000	Self-Published Book
Bridge Academy	\$10,000	Projector/Screen/Popcorn Machine
Clara B. Ford Academy	\$10,000	After School Clubs/Staff PD/Media Center
Creative Technologies Academy	\$13,000	Field Scoreboard/PA System/ Piano
Hope Academy of West Michigan	\$10,000	Additional Support Staff ELL
Hope of Detroit Academy	\$7,000	Staff PD
Huron Academy	\$10,000	Software/Staff PD
Joy Preparatory Academy	\$10,000	HVAC-Gym
Lighthouse Academy	\$10,000	Additional Support Staff ELL
Marshall Academy	\$18,000	Safety/Security
Michigan Collegiate	\$10,000	Safety/Security
Muskegon Montessori Academy for Environmental Change	\$10,500	Eureka Math & Safety/Security
New Bedford Academy	\$12,500	Safety/Security
Northridge Academy	\$12,500	Gym Floor/Scoreboard
Pittsfield Acres Academy	\$10,000	Play Structure
Voyageur Academy	\$18,000	Safety/Security

❖ CSO Quarterly Board Development and Networking Meeting

Mark your calendar for the next Zoom convening on **January 18, 2023 6pm – 7pm**. An email will be sent to all board members in December, before the holidays, from Andrea Ruggles with a registration link. The topic will be “**Student Academic Data for Board Members**”. Time will be given for board members to collaborate on how to best use student academic data to drive the work of the board.

Each board member that attends a CSO quarterly board development and networking convening can earn one professional development credit for their respective board. To earn the credit the board member will share their 2-3 takeaways about it at a board meeting. Boards are required to complete three credits per academic year by two or more board members.

❖ Ferris Momentum Enrollment Program

Ferris State University and the Charter Schools Office is pleased to announce the rollout of the Ferris Momentum Enrollment Program. Any high school student graduating from a FSU-authorized high school will automatically be accepted into the University **AND** receive a scholarship of \$3,500 which is renewable for four years. The program begins in January 2023.

❖ 2022-2023 Board Professional Development Webinar Series

The third live webinar, *Assessing Your Governance Work*, in our 2022-2023 board professional development series, *The Art of Intentional Governance: Creating a Governance Model that Ensures the Right Focus at the Right Time* will be Tuesday January 17, 2023 6:00pm – 6:30pm.

Board members look for an email invitation from AirWin Educational Services with registration information. With an intentional agenda focus, this session will offer a “check in” with boards on how well they are managing their agenda and the topics identified. In addition, this session will highlight the importance of efficient meeting, as well as accurate and comprehensive board meeting minutes.

Below are links to the on-demand webinars and recordings of previous live webinars.

[Are you Informed Yet? How to Manage Information Overload in Your Governance Role](#)

[Suspension and Expulsion: The Appropriate Role of the Board](#)

[Recruitment 101: The Role of the Board, Mission and Culture](#)

[The Finance and Academic Alignment: Painting and Seeing the Big Picture](#)

[What's New in 2022](#)

[Planning the Work & Working the Plan - A Crash Course in Strategic Planning](#)

Again, each board member that attends a live webinar or watches an on-demand webinar can earn one professional development credit for their respective board. To earn the credit the board member will share their 2-3 takeaways about the webinar at a board meeting. Boards are required to complete three credits per academic year by two or more board members.

❖ School Boards Impact on Student Achievement

In 2011 the National School Board Association’s Center for Public Education gathered multiple studies that focused on the characteristics, practices and effectiveness of elected and appointed school boards across the United States. By compiling this information they were able to compare school board practices in districts with similar demographics, but had substantially different student outcomes as reflected by assessments and other factors.

In conclusion, the Center found that school boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. Their findings are highlighted below, and are frequently referenced when school boards evaluate their effectiveness and the impact their governance has on student achievement.

Characteristics of an Effective School Board

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction. Define clear goals toward that vision.
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, as well as the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
- Are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.

- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community. Have established a strong communication structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Lead as a united team with the school leader, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their school leader, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Danger Signs of An Ineffective School Board

- Are only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives, and seldom able to describe actions being taken to improve student learning.
- Focus on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation.
- Micro-manage day-to-day school operations.
- Little understanding or coordination of staff development for teachers.
- Quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education or barriers to community outreach.
- Left out of the information flow; little communication between the board and school leader.
- Look at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students, and families as major causes for low performance.
- Little professional development together as a board.

❖ Any Questions?

You may contact your FSU CSO 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.