

March 2024 Board Communication

❖ School Safety/Emergency Operation Plan

Each and every school day our schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children safe from threats (human-caused emergencies such as crime and violence) and hazards (disease and illness outbreaks, accidents and natural disasters).

Schools are legally obligated to exercise due diligence in preventing and mitigating harm to students and staff. Beginning January 1, 2020, and **at least every 2 years thereafter**, the Michigan Revised School Code requires schools to develop, in conjunction with at least one law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school and input from the public, an emergency operation plan for each school building it operates. The plan must include guidelines and procedures that address at least all of the following:

- School violence and attacks
- Threats of school violence and attacks
- Bomb threats
- Fire
- Weather-related emergencies
- Intruders
- Parent and pupil reunification
- Threats to a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises
- A plan to train teachers on mental health and pupil and teacher safety
- A plan to improve school building security
- An active violence protocol
- Continuity of operations after an incident
- A vulnerability assessment

In addition, the Michigan Fire Prevention Code requires schools, each school year, to conduct a minimum of 5 practice fire drills and 2 tornado safety drills. The law further states that schools conduct 3 practice drills in which the occupants are restricted to the interior of the building and the building is secured. This type of drill shall include security measures that are appropriate to an emergency, such as the release of a hazardous material or the presence of a potentially dangerous individual on or near the premises. Within 30 days of a completed drill the school must post on their website documentation of the completed drill and maintain the drill documentation on its website for at least 3 years.

The aftermath of the nation's far too many school shootings continues to raise the level of attention to issues surrounding the safety of our school buildings and the students and staff who occupy those buildings. The anxiety and challenges school boards, school leadership, staff, students, families and communities face are significant and real.

Schools must navigate the increasingly complex world of emergency preparedness. The development, implementation, practice drills and continually refinement of a school's comprehensive high-quality emergency operation plan are vital in providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment.

❖ FSU Board of Trustees Remaining 2024 Meeting Dates and Deadlines

FSU Board of Trustees Meeting Dates	Board Candidate Application Epicenter Deadline	Request for Charter Contract Amendment Deadline	CSO Deadline to Submit all BOT-related Documents
May 3, 2024	March 18, 2024*	March 25, 2024**	April 1, 2024
October 4, 2024	August 19, 2024*	August 26, 2024**	September 2, 2024
December 12, 2024	October 28, 2024*	November 4, 2024**	November 11, 2024

* No later than this deadline, the Academy Board must formally recommend board candidate for appointment. Also, the candidate's application/conflict of interest questionnaire, resume and proof of US citizenship must be submitted in Epicenter.

** No later than this deadline, the Academy Board must formally approve a Board Resolution for a Charter Contract Amendment. Also, the Academy Board must send the signed Board Resolution to the CSO Director for consideration.

❖ Important Epicenter Deadlines

March 18, 2024 – Board of Directors Application (for May 3, 2024 FSU BOT meeting)

April 2, 2024 – Student Count

❖ Important Date

April 1, 2024 – Board Member 2024 Reappointment Deadline

❖ Charter Contract

The State of Michigan, through an authorizing body (FSU), grants a Public School Academy (your school) the authority to educate public school students, and in order to do so will receive state and federal funds. The FSU Board of Trustees and the Academy Board of Directors enter into a written agreement called the Charter Contract.

The Board of Directors is the entity legally responsible for governing and overseeing the operation of the school. Therefore, it is imperative that board members read and understand the Charter Contract. In order to govern wisely and the school to operate, the board must know the basic promises made between the Academy and FSU that are set forth in the Charter Contract.

Without a working understanding of its contents, the board and its individual members cannot exercise their fiduciary and other legal responsibilities. For example, without an understanding of the fiscal agent agreement, the board does not know how state aid funds flow to the academy. Without an understanding of the educational goals, the board cannot understand the context of the academic data shared with the board. Based on the principles of good school board governance and on behalf of the families and taxpayers who trust the school to prepare students for college, work and life, both the board and its individual board members need to have an understanding of the Charter Contract.

Without going into details of the contract language itself, we want to highlight what is at the core of the Charter Contract. It is the promise to measurably improve academic achievement for all groups of students. **At board meetings, all discussions, presentations and examination of documents should begin with the question, How does this relate to improving academic outcomes for students?** In addition, the Charter Contract contains promises related to other Michigan statutory and legal requirements.

In March, board members please watch for an email from Sharon Hopper. She will be sending you an electronic copy of your respective academy's Charter Contract with the Ferris State University Board of Trustees.

In addition, each Board President will receive a hard copy of the Charter Contract. For quick reference and clarification, we encourage the board to keep it on hand during board meetings. We intentionally put it in a large binder in hopes the Board will add other important documents they want to readily reference. You may want to include your Educational Services Provider Agreement, Lease Agreement, CSO Contract Performance Report, legal opinions from the board attorney and any other important document.

If individual board members want their own hard copy, please don't hesitate to contact Sharon and request a copy. Also, if you have any questions related to the Charter Contract, please contact our office.

❖ 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.