

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

September 2024 Board Communication

❖ Message from CSO Director Chris Loiselle

Welcome to a new year with the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office! We're excited to begin with new faces and a refined approach to charter authorizing. Our previous leadership provided a strong foundation, but with rising expectations for charter authorizers, we're committed to continuous improvement. We're updating our practices to align with national best practices, new legal and compliance requirements, and preparing for our 2025-26 Cognia accreditation.

This year, we encountered legislative efforts to increase authorizer oversight and attempts to reduce our funding. Several new Senate bills could significantly impact our oversight responsibilities during the current year. Moving into the future, we expect increased scrutiny in ensuring our academies provide high-quality educational opportunities for the communities they serve.

During this school year, your field representative will introduce our new methods for overseeing and evaluating Academy and Board practices in our four key areas: academic, fiscal, operational, and compliance. We're aligning our practices with the [National Association of Charter School Authorizers \(NACSA\) Principles & Standards](#), the leading standards for quality charter school authorizing.

As the CSO, we are committed to supporting all our academies, particularly those facing challenges. Our approach involves evaluating performance in the four pillars, identifying issues, providing meaningful support, and maintaining transparency, while continuously refining our practices to align with best practices and legal standards. We are excited for the future as we embark on developing this new model with you. Thank you!

❖ 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.

As we start the new school year, we will focus on Pillar #3 Operations:

- Have we met our projected enrollment?
- How are we supporting the school leader and teacher morale in the opening weeks of school?
- Review the staffing plan. For any open positions, what is the plan to fill them?
- Do our schools have all the supplies needed to be successful this year?
- Are all summer maintenance/renovation projects complete? Were any additional projects identified for work during the school year?

❖ CSO Team Members

In the February 2024 Board Communication we introduced you to Chris Loiselle – CSO Director, Beth Taylor – School Support Specialist and our Field Representatives Linda Bouman, Ronnie Phillips, Jim Scholten, Dr. Michele Siderman and Susan Wakefield. Now it's time to introduce you to the rest of your CSO team.



Margaret Baker will join us beginning October 1 as our Associate Director. She grew up and lives in the city of Grand Rapids where both her parents worked for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. She is a graduate of Grand Rapids Catholic Central, Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame). Her passion is providing students with a variety of educational experiences by nurturing children's curiosity and creativity. She genuinely enjoys providing pathways for students to find their own success for the betterment of our communities and Country.

Margaret spent the majority of her career at Coopersville Area Public Schools in West Michigan serving in a variety of roles including: teacher, media specialist, Curriculum Director, and Assistant Superintendent. As a member of the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office, Margaret hopes to provide support to the vision of the FSU Charter Schools.



Todd Oatley began in July as our Field Representative for Marshall Academy and Muskegon Montessori Academy for Environmental Change. He grew up in northern Michigan, attending Cadillac Public Schools. It was there that he developed a love of water and the outdoors. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Western Michigan University. Todd spent his whole 33-year career in education working at Greenville High School, first as a teacher and coach, and then many years as high school assistant principal. During his teaching tenure, he volunteered to help develop a school within a school program in Greenville, called *Project Turn Around*, which annually identified roughly forty incoming 9th-grade students who were most likely not to graduate. Through intensive interventions, cross-curricular instruction, project-based learning, adult mentors, extra teacher planning time, etc...., every group of *Project Turn Around* students had over a 95% graduation rate. The tremendously rewarding and satisfying experiences with these at-risk students led Todd to become an assistant principal. His focus on teaching and learning is centered around his "Three Rs": Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!

Todd lives in Rockford with his wife Amy. They have three adult children, all in their twenties, who still live and work in Michigan. He is an active member of his church and participates in a few men's faith-based groups. Todd enjoys the outdoors, long walks, and traveling to the National Parks and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Todd looks forward to this new adventure that still allows him to continue serving the educational community and our country's most valuable asset, our young people.



Alyssa Myers joined the CSO team in August as our new Secretary. She was born in Big Rapids, Michigan, and she graduated with a bachelor's degree in history from Ferris State University at the end of the Spring 2024 semester. Alyssa loves learning, and although she has graduated from Ferris, she will continue to take classes as time permits. In her free time, Alyssa likes to Facetime her niece, Faith, knit, read, and thrift shop. Alyssa is excited to join the team at the Charter Schools Office, learn from her new co-workers, and serve the students, staff, and any others affiliated with the charter schools authorized by the Ferris State CSO.



Andrea Ruggles is also a Secretary. She has 25 years of dedicated service at Ferris State University. Throughout her tenure at Ferris, she has supported the College of Pharmacy Dean's Office, the Sports, Entertainment and Hospitality Management department within the College of Business and is now in her 3rd year with the Charter Schools Office. She holds an associate degree in Legal Studies and a bachelor's degree in Integrative Studies, both from Ferris State University.

Prior to joining Ferris, she worked as a legal secretary for the Mecosta County Prosecutor's Office. Andrea grew up in the Big Rapids and surrounding area. In her free time, she enjoys devoting time to her husband and two children, her father, her siblings, and their families. She appreciates nature, loves sports and outdoor activities, and most everything that she, her husband, and children do ends up in some sort of a friendly competition.



Sharon Hopper is our Compliance and Governance Specialist. She was born a Hoosier and moved to Big Rapids, Michigan at age 6 when her father took a position at Ferris State University as a professor. She earned an associate degree in legal assisting from Ferris State University, bachelor's degree in public administration from Davenport University and master's degree in criminal justice administration from Ferris State University.

Throughout her career Sharon has relished researching and analyzing laws, policies and procedures and providing that information to others. She worked in the Kent County court system for 18 years as a pretrial investigator and enforcement officer. Subsequently, she joined the Ferris State University family in 2007, working 5 years in the legal counsel's office as the labor relations and equal opportunity specialist, 5 years in the human resources department as the employee relations specialist and now 6 ½ years with the CSO.



The entire **CSO Team** is excited about the 2024-2025 school year as we support your board, school leader and staff ensuring each child at your school has an opportunity to learn, grow and reach their full potential. As Chris will tell you, it's going to be great!

❖ **2024-2025 CSO Competitive Grant Program**

Since its inception in 1997, the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office has provided resources to the University's authorized public-school academies in numerous ways. Our mission statement sums up that commitment:

By implementing quality oversight, the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office focuses on student growth and achievement, offers professional learning opportunities, and provides relevant resources to its public-school academies.

Consistent with our mission, the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office is pleased to announce that all FSU-authorized academies are eligible to apply for a competitive grant of up to \$25,000 for the 2024-2025 academic year. The grant may be used for one of four "bucket" areas: Safety and Security, Extra Curricular Activities, Staff Professional Development or Other Projects. The total amount of funds for the grant program offered by the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office is **\$400,000**.

Here is some specific information:

- Academies must complete the CSO Competitive Grant Request Application outlining the project, anticipated cost, and rationale for the project. The completed application is submitted in Epicenter no later than November 15, 2024.
- Grant requests may be for any amount up to, but not exceeding \$25,000 to fund specific projects not covered by the Academy's general fund. The grants are not meant to supplant general budget money, but to enhance offerings or projects that the Academy would not be able to fund otherwise.
- The grant must benefit academy students and/or staff.
- Academies may apply for more than one grant, but must use a separate application for each request. Award amounts are cumulative, no academy will be awarded more than \$25,000 in total funding.
- Academies will be notified of their grant status no later than November 29, 2024. Grant awards will be disbursed with the December 2024 State Aid payments.

❖ 2024-2025 Virtual Board Professional Development Opportunities

This year eight Michigan charter school authorizers, including Ferris State University, contracted with Angela Irwin from AirWin Educational Services to facilitate a board professional development webinar/Zoom series, *Board Governance Etiquette*. This series will include five GoToWebinars and four interactive sessions via a Zoom platform. If you can't make it each session will be recorded and the link will be provided to board members in future Board Communications. The dates, topics and delivery platform are as follows:

Date	Topic	Delivery Platform
September 3, 2024 Tuesday 6pm	Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member: Part 1	Zoom
October 1, 2024 Tuesday 6pm	Why Can't We All Just Get Along?	GoToWebinar
November 5, 2024 Tuesday 6pm	Establishing a Positive Board Culture	GoToWebinar
December 3, 2024 Tuesday 6pm	Board President Interaction	Zoom
January 7, 2025 Tuesday 6pm	Bringing Order to Meetings	GoToWebinar
February 4, 2025 Tuesday 6pm	The Role of the Treasurer	Zoom
March 4, 2025 Tuesday 6pm	Acquainting Yourself With Board Policies	GoToWebinar
April 1, 2025 Tuesday 6pm	Cultivating Relationships as Part of Good Governance	GoToWebinar
May 6, 2025 Tuesday 6pm	Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member: Part 2	Zoom

A formal invitation from Angela Irwin - AirWin Educational Services will be emailed to board members. The invitation will include a brief description of the session and registration instructions.

Each board member that attends or watches a webinar or interactive session can earn one professional development credit for their respective board. To earn the credit the board member will share 2-3 takeaways about the session at a board meeting. Boards are required to complete three credits per academy year by two or more board members. FSU Field Representatives will periodically report on your board's standing with professional development credits.

❖ Important Epicenter Deadlines

September 1, 2024 – Annual Inventory of Capital Assets
September 1, 2024 – Board Calendar on Academy's Website-Certification of Completion
September 1, 2024 – Board of Directors Policies on Academy's Website-Certification of Completion
September 5, 2024 – Educational Entity Master District or School Update
September 30, 2024 – Emergency Drills Schedule – Certification
September 30, 2024 – ESP Information Policy Requirement
September 30, 2024 – Integrated Pest Management Plan-Annual Notice
October 1, 2024 – Annual Verification of Non-Profit Corporation Status
October 28, 2024 – Board of Directors Application (for 12/12/2024 FSU BOT meeting)

❖ Important Dates

October 2, 2024 – Count Day
October 4, 2024 – FSU Board of Trustees meeting
October 19, 2024 – Charter School Day at FSU

❖ In-Person Board Professional Development Opportunity

In addition to our virtual board training series, we are thrilled to offer board members an in-person board professional development opportunity this Fall. Again, we are partnering with 7 other Michigan charter school authorizers where Angie Irwin will provide a formal presentation followed by a breakout session/table discussion facilitated by Angie and the authorizers and ending with the attendees re-convening for a meal together.

The session will walk through governance framework, based on best practices, which will include the following “governance buckets”:

- Policy & Practice
- Planning & Relationships
- Operations & Procedures

The interactive session will encourage board members to consider their practices and processes and determine which “governance bucket” these practices and processes should be placed. Participants will leave with an outline of a governance framework that they can build upon and refer to as they execute their respective governance roles.

There are five regional sessions to choose from. The same content will be repeated at all five locations. The session will begin at 5pm and end by 8pm. The dates and locations are as follows:

Date	Location
October 2, 2024 Wednesday 5pm-8pm	MAPSA Headquarters 123 W. Allegan, Suite 750 Lansing, MI
October 17, 2024 Thursday 5pm-8pm	Cesar Chavez Academy High School 1761 Waterman Street Detroit, MI
October 30, 2024 Wednesday 5pm-8pm	Grand Traverse Academy 1245 E. Hammond Road Traverse City, MI
November 6, 2024 Wednesday 5pm-8pm	Voyageur Academy 4366 Military Road Detroit, MI
November 13, 2024 Wednesday 5pm-8pm	Faxon Academy 26275 Northwestern Highway Southfield, MI

Board members, be sure to check your email for registration and other information about this in-person, interactive professional development opportunity. This is a unique opportunity to sharpen your governance skills and earn a professional development credit for your board. We think you'll benefit greatly by the conversations with other board members generated around the content and tapping into the knowledge and experiences of Angie and 8 authorizers. We look forward to seeing you at one of the sessions!

❖ 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.