



# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY™

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## CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE



## November/December 2025

### News and Updates

November 14, 2025



When Ferris State University authorizes a public school academy, it is an endeavor to positively transform the life trajectory of the students who attend that academy. The Charter Schools Office holds as its most fundamental goal that all students be prepared for success in college, work, and life. Test scores and knowledge are important but are not enough to succeed in an ever-competitive and connected global community.

We believe that students must be able to apply knowledge to new situations, and to seek out new information through research skills and technological competence. To accomplish this, each academy must provide an environment to achieve academic excellence by delivering quality programming and instruction for the students it serves.

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# Messages from the CSO Director



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## Charter School Day 2025

On November 1, 2025, the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) proudly hosted Charter School Day, welcoming approximately 160 school leaders, students, teachers, and chaperones from several Ferris-authorized charter schools to campus for a day of celebration, connection, and Bulldog pride.

Participants from **Creative Technologies Academy, Hope Academy of West Michigan, Hope of Detroit Academy, Learn4Life–Pontiac, Marshall Academy, Michigan Collegiate, and Voyageur Academy** joined in the festivities. The day offered students and educators a chance to explore college life and deepen their connection to Ferris State University.

The event featured a presentation on the Ferris experience, a guided campus tour, and exciting attendance at the Ferris State University football game at Top Taggart Field—where the Bulldogs triumphed with an impressive 70–35 victory under beautiful fall weather. Guests enjoyed a picnic lunch at the game and concluded the day with dinner at The Rock, FSU’s popular campus cafeteria.

Charter School Day highlighted the shared commitment of Ferris State University and its partner schools to providing meaningful educational experiences that inspire students to envision their future beyond the classroom. Please enjoy some of the pictures from this year’s fantastic event!





# Messages from the CSO Associate Director

I am grateful for the opportunities that I have so far to visit your buildings and meet your leadership teams. My best learning has been through observing others, and I am already learning so much in my new role!

To support my own continuous learning, for years I have subscribed to a weekly message through leader, Dr. Debbie McFalone. She provides inspiration and resources and support for leading in education.

Check out the attached summary of her October summary *Step Into Your Power, Lead with Hope*. I would love to be a conversation partner with anyone on leadership topics if you are interested, please reach out and connect with me.



**Kelly Buckmaster**  
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Charter Schools Office  
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[Read Step Into Your Power, Lead With Hope" Here](#)

[Meet Kelly Buckmaster](#)



Safety and Security



Extra-Curricular  
Activities



Staff PD



Other

## 2025 Competitive Grants

Our competitive grant applications have been coming in, and it is exciting to read about the innovative and creative ways you will be supporting students with these dollars.

Applications are due November 15, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. We will be working on review and grant awards soon, with notifications to academies coming by November 29.

[View Application Here](#)



# Out of School Time Grant

Thank you to the academies that have signed up to be part of our application with the Out of School Time Grant (through the Michigan Department of Education) to provide opportunities for students with before or after school and for summer programming. Deedee Stackley and I will be working together as we navigate through the process.

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## Messages from the School Support Specialist



**Beth Taylor**  
School Support Specialist  
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## Building Connections: A New Networking Opportunity for Leaders

During this fall's school support visits, many school leaders expressed interest in connecting with peers from similar academies to exchange ideas and strengthen collaboration. In response, the CSO is exploring the creation of **Education Networking Groups** to bring together leaders from across the FSU portfolio and beyond.

The FSU portfolio represents a wide range of educational models. To foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration, we plan to begin with three **virtual networking groups**, with the goal of hosting an **in-person joint networking event in the spring**. The initial groups will include:

- Alternative Education Networking Group
- K–8 Networking Group
- 9–12 Networking Group

These groups will provide a collaborative space for academy leaders to:

- Share best practices and innovative strategies
- Discuss common challenges and solutions
- Build partnerships that enhance student outcomes

Participation is voluntary, and members will have the opportunity to help shape each group's focus and meeting schedule. **If you are interested in helping plan and lead one of the groups, please contact Beth Taylor at Bethtaylor@ferris.edu.**

This initiative underscores our ongoing commitment to fostering collaboration, innovation, and professional growth across all academies. More information about the group's formation and first meeting will be shared soon—stay tuned!

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# NWEA Winter Testing Reminder

- Winter: December 8, 2025, to February 13, 2026 (10 weeks)
- There is a student participation goal of 95% or higher for grades 2-8.
- It is optional for students enrolled in grades K-1 and 9-12.
- All questions should be directed to Beth Taylor (**BethTaylor@ferris.edu**)
- Contractual goals related to NWEA are:

Are students making expected annual growth compared to their peers?		
Target	Measure	Metric
50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	The fall to spring average of all NWEA MAP "School Conditional Growth Percentiles" in reading and math	Exceeds: ≥ 70 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Meets: ≥50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile but <70 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Approaching: ≥30 Percentile but <50 Percentile Does Not Meet: <30 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Are students achieving proficiency on a nationally normed assessment?		
Target	Measure	Metric
50%	The percentage of students meeting grade level norms on the reading and math NWEA MAP.	Exceeds: ≥ 70% Meets: ≥50% but <70% Approaching: ≥30% but <50% Does Not Meet: <30%

## Messages from the Compliance & Governance Specialist



**Sharon Hopper**  
Compliance &  
Governance Specialist  
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## 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.



## Michigan Charter Symposium

Registration for the 2025 Michigan Charter Schools Symposium is now open. Secure your spot today and join this transformative event. Participants will have the opportunity to explore innovative strategies, share success stories, and collaborate to shape the future of charter education in Michigan.

This premier event will gather over 450 influential attendees, including charter school leaders, management company executives, and authorizers, all focused on advancing the charter school movement.

The 2025 Symposium will be on December 10-11 2025, at the Detroit Marriott Troy.

**Registration closes is just under two weeks. Use this code for \$200 off registration for 2 people from your FSU-Authorized Academy: FSU25**

[Register Here](#)

## Our Mission and Vision Statement

**Ferris State University Mission**

Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad-based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society.

## Charter Schools Office Vision Statement

FSU will authorize public school academies that promise to transform the lives of students by demonstrating high-quality performance.

## Charter Schools Office Mission Statement

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office provides quality oversight and support by focusing on the four pillars of academics, finances, operations, and governance/compliance.

## Core Values

1. Student Learning
2. A Collaborative Working Environment
3. Diversity
4. Opportunities
5. Excellence
6. Accountability
7. Integrity and Trust

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### Contact Us

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