



Charter Schools Office

*Blended Learning Academies
Credit Recovery High School*



Mid-Contract Review
December 13-14, 2016

Report: Mid-Contract Review Visitation
Academy: Blended Learning Academies
Credit Recovery High School
Visitation Dates: December 13-14-2016

The visitation occurred at the Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School Campus with three members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (FSU-CSO) visitation team. The team had the opportunity to meet with and interview the school leadership team, three school board members and the School Improvement Team. The team also had the opportunity to interview four students. The team was able to tour all of the facilities and visit several classrooms to observe teaching and learning. We appreciate the open communication and transparency that was apparent with all we were able to interact with.

Visitation Findings –

School Systems and School Improvement Plan (SIP) Review

We had the opportunity to review in depth the documents with school leaders and staff.

SIP Review with School Improvement Team

It is clear that the staff is well aware of the SIP – its goals and efforts for improvement.

The strategies that the team was very much engaged with were:

- Goal 1 indicates that “All students at Blended Learning Academies will graduate college or career ready.” Objective 1 states “80% of All Students will demonstrate a proficiency to attend class daily.”
 - The team is working on how to measure if students graduate college or are career ready.
 - In order to help students be in class daily the Academy makes parent phone calls (teachers are making many of these calls), automated calls are made if contact is not made, letters are sent to parents, a paraprofessional makes personal calls to “heavy hitters”, the paraprofessional and the school leader will also make personal house calls when necessary. The Academy has also been assigned a liaison officer by the local police department who also works with students and parents.
 - It is reported that approximately 50% of the students attend at a rate of 95% of the time.
- Goal 2 states “All students at Blended Learning Academies will demonstrate consistent increases in academic achievement in Mathematics and English Language Arts.”
 - The staff is providing instruction in reading comprehension in all classes.

- Teachers are providing “Bell Ringers” or “Warm-ups” in their classes to emphasize areas of learning. Teachers are providing learning targets.
- The Academy is looking at MI Path which is available through “EdGenuity” that will show learning targets to achieve growth related to NWEA.
- The staff provides after school help each day for students.
- The staff cares for and values the whole person.
- The staff provides positive reinforcement and honest communication. They work to meet each student at the classroom door each day. The staff knows they need to earn the students trust.
- Students are developing EDPs.
- The staff is learning how to redirect students’ behavior in a positive direction.
- The online program “EdGenuity” seems to be working well for earning credit.

EdYes! School Systems Review

- The EdYes! Report shows “Beginning Implementation” or “Partial Implementation” for each indicator. There are very few items checked for evidences.

Opportunities for Growth

In regards to the SIP we make the following suggestions:

- Identify teaching strategies that will be implemented in **all** classrooms that will result in effective teaching and learning. How will all be held accountable to implement these? How will you determine if these strategies are beneficial?
- Develop a strategy that will meet the needs of students who are behind in any particular subject. Currently, students take “traditional” classes for credit or take “online” classes for credit. It may be helpful to provide remedial classes for those students who are not ready to take a class for credit.
- Use your newly developed contract goals to drive and help develop your School Improvement Goals. These need to be in alignment.
- Ask other similar schools how they are improving attendance rates.
- Continue to work to have each student develop their EDP and provide many opportunities to review this with them for encouragement and accountability.
- Continue to implement MI Path.

In regards to the EdYes! Report we make the following suggestions:

- As you work on this report for this year pay close attention the standards and indicators. Work to establish appropriate evidences in your Academy that will result in achieving the standards and evidences. Provide clear copies of all evidences checked.
- As you grow into “full” or “sustained” status your Academy will provide a better program for your students.

Facilities Review

We enjoyed our tour of your facilities and classrooms. We observed they are well kept, safe and conducive to learning. It is interesting how you have a facility that serves different populations from pre-school to high school to elder care. You also have many ideas and plans for expansion as needed in each category.

Opportunities for Growth

- None at this time.

Academy Culture

- It is clearly evident that there is a culture of mutual respect from students, teachers, support staff, administrators, and school board members.
- Students feel safe both physically and emotionally. They feel safe to share.
- There is recognition of how students feel about themselves and school.
- There is respectful honesty with the students.
- The students appeared to be fully engaged in their learning.
- The students like the school and teachers.
- The students recognize that they have received help from many different people at the Academy.

Opportunities for Growth

- None at this time.

Mission Accomplishment

When asked “How do you ensure your mission, vision, and core values are embedded in what you do?” the responses included:

- It is what we do every day.
- Each and every day we ask “What are we good at, what do we need to do better”.
- Preaching every day to develop positive relationships.
- It is important for our teacher to believe that they can help each student to learn.
- The mission and vision have guided the development of our strategic plan.

Opportunities for Growth

- Work at all levels to be more intentional in your efforts to align what you do every day with your mission, vision, and core values.

Website

A review of your website showed that you are providing essential information. It appears to be well designed. Continue to complete areas “Under Construction” and possibly provide a link to a fuller display of your curriculum.

Opportunities for Growth

- You may want to consider a third party to help with your website. This could help to provide stability and technical skills when needed. Your current staff may have too much on their plate to effectively meet future demands.

Academy Internal Review

Student Outcomes

- The school leader made the following observations:
 - There is some growth, but we have a long way to go.
 - Is there an appropriate emphasis placed on tests that are given? We need to speak to all parties about the value of testing.
 - Many kids have repeated failure so we know their background knowledge is low.
 - Many of our kids have a bad past, they move around a lot.
 - I am concerned about the level of teaching and learning in each classroom.
 - I am working to help teachers have good classroom management, develop effective lesson plans which include learning targets, to engage students, and to provide one-on-one learning opportunities.
 - We are working to best provide credit recovery programs.
 - I am working to define assessment goals for teacher evaluation and help teachers develop effective IDPs.
 - It is important that we all take responsibility for what we do seriously.
 - Ask each day “Can I give each child a fresh start every day?”

Governance and Leadership

- Your responses indicate that the following are in place. Our observations support these.
 - Your Board has seen the benefit of working with Angie Irwin. With her help, you have developed a strategic plan that will drive improvement for your Academy.
 - You have a good understanding of the roles of the Board and the management company because of your work with Angie Irwin.
 - You recognize the need to be more compliant with state and authorizer expectations.
 - You also recognize the need to be more intentional in your use of your mission, vision, and core values.
 - You subscribe to the National Charter Schools Institute Board Policies. This allows the Board to assure that they have effective, best policies in place to give direction to the Academy.
 - The Board is making progress to have a complete Board and to assure that the Board will meet regularly as required by the Open Meetings Act.
 - The Board allows and expects the school leadership and staff to manage day-to-day operations.

Resources and Support Systems

- Your responses indicate that the following are in place. Our observations support these.
 - The Academy is always working to make the most of its available resources.
 - Facilities are well kept.
 - There is a wide range of media and informational resources that support the educational programs.

- The Academy’s technology infrastructure supports the teaching and learning needs of the students.
- The Academy provides support services to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of the students.
- You are making efforts and having success in developing many community partners to help meet the needs of your students.

Opportunities for Growth

- It is apparent that your new school leader has a clear idea of what needs to be done to help teachers and students succeed. We encourage all parties to support those efforts to implement effective teaching and learning practices as well as the development of internal practices. It is important to provide leadership stability.
- Continue efforts to improve compliance rates.
- Ensure that your strategic plan and school improvement plan are aligned.
- Make sure you understand and meet the expectations of your “Alternative Ed Attendance” waiver.
- Develop an enrollment plan. Know what you will do as enrollment increases.
- Continue your efforts to complement what you are doing with mentoring and job shadowing opportunities.
- Continue to communicate and work closely with FSU as you explore opportunities in “Vocational Education” and any additional sites that may be planned.
- As the Board implements, their new strategic plan begins to determine how you will monitor that process for success.

**CSO Review of Overall Performance for Blended Learning Academies
Credit Recovery High School (BLA)**

Contract Performance Report Review

CSO Points of Pride for **BLA**

- BLA met the FSU CSO Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth target for the one grade that was statistically relevant.

CSO Areas of Concern for **BLA**

- Administrative turnover has played a key role in the lack of development of internal procedures.
- 2016 SAT average of total scores was only 763.
- The percentage of BLA’s business and administrative costs are the highest in the CSO’s portfolio.
- In 2015-16 three Board Meetings were cancelled, percent of on-time compliance was 91% for last year.

School Support Team (SST) Updates

CSO Points of Pride for **BLA**

- “Yellow” designation was based on the PSA being open less than three years.
- Only one Board Meeting canceled this year.
- Board is working with Angie Irwin.
- Compliance process has improved this year.
- Board has almost completed a new Strategic Plan.
- Board has added two new members.
- Assessment procedures have improved.

CSO Area of Concern for **BLA**

- BLA has generated limited academic performance data for the BLA Board or the CSO to analyze.
- This PSA must continue to pay attention to details when completing and submitting Board documents.
- SIP Goal 2 deals with academic achievement- the SIP does not mention how this achievement will be tracked.
- The CSO will use the new Educational Goals for metrics and thresholds.

Opportunities for Growth

- Review and determine if current mission is still accurate.
- Continue to improve internal operations that lead to consistencies and growth from year to year.
- Communicate
- Adjust as needed
- Work as a team to meet the new Educational Goals and the Strategic Plan initiatives.

CSO Expectations in Consideration for Recommendation of Reauthorization

At this time:

- Successful implementation of new procedures with fidelity that results in attainment of the new Educational Goals and meets the CSO’s expectations with governance, leadership, and compliance.

Signed James K. Scholten
CSO Visitation Chair

Signed Ronald S. Schneider
CSO Associate Director

Date: January 5, 2017

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