

Report: Reauthorization Review Visitation
Academy: Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School
Date: November 7 - 8, 2018

The visitation occurred at the Blended Learning Academy with three members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) visitation team. The team had the opportunity to meet with and interview the school leadership team, two school board members, and the School Improvement Team. The team was able to tour the facility and visit several classrooms to observe teaching and learning. We were also able to tour the Preschool and Senior Living Programs located in the same building. We appreciate the staff and stakeholder’s open communication and transparency that was apparent during our visit.

Visitation Findings

School Improvement Process and Results	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are aware they are using NWEA results to determine areas of academic weakness and will be using those to determine interventions. Teachers are planning to meet as a group to review data and determine how to develop interventions and improve instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to high turnover of staff, try to identify 4 or 5 non-negotiables you would like your staff to do well, versus having multiple activities/interventions. Review the SIP and FSU Educational Goals and Yellow School Action Plan and Strategic Plan and insure they are all focusing on the same goals and activities. Establish a process for onboarding new staff where teachers can train and refer back to the 4 or 5 non-negotiables for the school. Continue efforts to help teachers to recognize the best delivery process for learning, i.e. direct instruction, online learning, and interventions. Consider opportunities to provide instructional coaching services for teachers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider implementing a consistent process for the teachers to discuss concerns and/or strategies to support student learning and develop the team.
<p><u>Facilities Review</u></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Observations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities for Growth</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility is well maintained and has undergone several upgrades including new windows and fresh paint. Technology is available in every room with Promethean Boards as well as one-to-one student computers. Building is locked and entrance monitored throughout the school day providing a safe and secure environment. Classrooms have adequate furniture for the students with plenty of space. The building has outdoor learning opportunities for students, i.e. farm animals and garden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While we recognize this is a former elementary building, it may be worth considering upgrades to meet the needs of young adults, i.e. higher sinks.
<p><u>Academy Culture Review</u></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Observations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities for Growth</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is evident the staff puts an emphasis on building positive relationships with each student and caring about the whole child. There is an emphasis and desire to try and help each student find academic success. The school is focusing on student engagement during the school day to create a positive and academically focused environment. While this is an alternative school, the students and staff feel as if this is a family atmosphere. The school has created places, such as the garden, goat farm and “de-stress board” (which was created by a student), to allow students to take the time needed to deescalate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to make it a priority to have staff that is well trained to work with the population the school serves, i.e. dealing with trauma and establishing a good classroom management plan.

Mission Accomplishment	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board is well aware of the mission and their efforts to help students not only graduate but become successful citizens. The board shares the mission with the community which has led to partnerships. The staff keeps in constant consideration whether the students feel safe, accepted and valued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider incorporating some of the main themes we observed in the video and through conversations as part of your mission statement, i.e. “second chances”, “fresh start”, and “to graduate”.
Website	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website has been updated with the assistance of an outside group and is live as of 11/7/2018 with a promotional video and also includes all of the expectations of a school’s website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time.

Academy Internal Review

Student Outcomes	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leadership fully understands the FSU goals and recognizes where their strengths and weaknesses are. They are working to address those. The primary goal for the school and the board which was established with the board and FSU is to focus on having students earn 4 credits per year. The students are currently achieving that goal. The teachers are using NWEA data to drive instruction and to create interventions. Staff recognizes that student growth and achievement is difficult due to the length of enrollment of students within the program. The school is working to resolve transportation problems that students encounter leading to higher absenteeism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue your efforts to adjust instruction based on what you are seeing from the testing data. Consider including the teachers in the Educational Development Plans so they can have some ownership in the student’s academic journey. Continue efforts to provide better transportation options for students.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leadership is working to identify best practices for teachers to use within the classroom specifically geared toward the alternative student population. • Students recognize the value of the Kickstand online program and allows the flexibility to move at their pace and earn credits towards graduation. 	
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Governance and Leadership

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board has a positive relationship with both the ESP and the School Leadership and holds both entities accountable to the contract expectations. They all know their roles and stay within them. • There is a lot of trust between the board and both the ESP and school leadership. • The board has a well-developed strategic plan and have scheduled monthly updates on the plan to determine how they are doing. • The board has invested in the services of Angie Irwin to assist them in the strategic planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider working with the management team to find creative ways to address teacher retention.

Resources and Support Systems

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expertise that the leadership brings to the school is incredibly helpful and beneficial for the staff and students. • The school leadership team wears a variety of hats, including the ability to deescalate and work with students to keep them in school as much as possible. • Through their partnership with Ingham County ISD, the school leadership and board is able to maximize the use of their available resources. • The school leadership team is sensitive to ensuring their documentation is done correctly and on time and is willing to reach out to external resources with questions as needed. • The school is providing an online platform, i.e. Kickstand, that supports student learning and provides automatic interventions. • The students expressed they could turn to the any of the adults in the building if they needed help or support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to obtain and retain qualified staff, specifically to work with their at-risk student population. • Consider creative ways you might be able to provide PE, Art, or music for the students during the school day, even on a part time basis. • Consider adding a social/emotional curriculum component to assist the population in dealing with their trauma. • Continue to explore a variety of ways to address trauma and student escalation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has developed multiple community partnerships and student internship opportunities with organizations, including but not limited to, Michigan Works, Sparrow Hospital, and Neogin. 	
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CSO Review of Overall Performance for Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School

Contract Performance Report Review	
Observations (2017-18 data)	Opportunities for Growth (2017-18 data)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment has increased each year Because this academy has unique goals and measures the CPR is not very useful for academic results For FSU authorized Strict Discipline Academies (SDA) and Alternative Education (Alt. Ed.) PSAs, like Blended Learning, FSU does not determine the usual comparison data with area schools. Each SDA and Alt. Ed. building services unique populations of students. If the MDE finalizes a separate Alt. Ed. Accountability System, FSU would use that measure. FSU does not list a comparison goal in the BLA Goals and Measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited number of students take the mandated SAT test. Average SAT Total Score was 863 for 2017. The goal is to have the average total score trend upward for the contractual term. MDE Index Score for 2016-17 was only 11.

School Support Team (SST) and Field Representative (FR) Updates	
Observations (2018-19 data)	Opportunities for Growth (2018-19 data)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellow SST Designated School. Academy is meeting the goal of students averaging 4 credits earned. Good leadership. Academy continues to create partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average ACT WorkKeys scores for Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents were 2.8, 3.4, and 3.3 (all out of 7). The goals are to average 4 or better.

Overall Opportunities for Growth

- Even if main goal is career and post-secondary options for students, find ways to improve academic results.
- Survey former students, especially former graduates, 2 and 4 years out, to document employment, successful enrollment in a post-secondary school, military, etc. This information will generate hard data about the success of the academy.

Current CSO Expectations in Consideration for Recommendation of Reauthorization. These are subject to change.

For Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School:

- Meet or exceed FSU CSO's unique academic measures and goals for BLA.
- Continue to follow all charter contractual expectations.
- The CSO may have other academic and non-academic expectations as more information becomes available. All other contractual and policy standards must be met and maintained.
- Improve your MDE Accountability Index Score.

Signed James K. Scholten
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