

Review Type: Re-authorization

Academy Name: Battle Creek Montessori Academy

Date(s): November 2 & 3, 2022

The Review occurred at Battle Creek Montessori Academy with 3 members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) Review team. The team had the opportunity to meet with, and interview, multiple stakeholder groups, including the School Leadership Team, Governing Board members, teachers, and parents. The team was able to visit 8 (all) classrooms to observe teaching and learning. The team had a discussion with the building leader focused on current operations. We appreciate the open communication and transparency from the academy team.

## Onsite Review Findings

Pillar #1: Academic Progress	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are classroom interactions cooperative and conducive to learning? Is there a structure approach to managing student behavior throughout the school?</li> <li>○ Does teacher provide clear learning goals leading to purposeful instruction?</li> <li>○ Are a variety of instructional strategies materials used to meet diverse needs?</li> <li>○ Is the learning environment structured and time maximized for learning? Do leaders and teachers share the responsibility for creating a learning environment that supports all students?</li> <li>○ Are students given the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills?</li> <li>○ Has the school identified growth initiatives that appropriately address the needs of their student population?</li> <li>○ Does the school prioritize continuous improvement and monitor progress toward goals?</li> <li>○ Is there evidence of a positive school climate focused on student learning?</li> </ul>	
Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Several staff enrolled in Montessori Experience training.</li> <li>● Common practices across grade levels – community meetings, work cycles, mid-day routines.</li> <li>● Weekly assessments for ELA, math, and spelling.</li> <li>● Revised behavior matrix is in place.</li> <li>● Added a Behavior Specialist to the staff.</li> <li>● Strong sense of “community” - everyone helps everyone.</li> <li>● The MICIP plan has established 3 Goals – MTSS Implementation, Tier I Instruction, and Whole Child Development. The superintendent is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue refining the building behavior matrix to provide consistent practices throughout the building to address student behaviors.</li> <li>● Continue working on teaching/building academic accountable talk with students to improve small group peer to peer interactions.</li> <li>● Consider creative ways to bridge the transition from BCMA to the traditional high school options in the area for both students and parents.</li> <li>● Consider finding creative ways to fund specials (music/art) .</li> <li>● Continue your efforts to determine what is necessary to meet your MICIP goals.</li> </ul>

<p>working with staff to prioritize the strategies that will best help to meet the goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff are attentive to meet the needs of the “Whole Child”. This culture is very evident throughout the building. Parents were very aware of this happening.</li> </ul>	
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**Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency**

- Does the academy demonstrate fiscal responsibility, responsiveness, and sustainability?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board has strong financial background/skills.</li> <li>• Board requests financial documentation verifying costs.</li> <li>• Monthly detailed financial reports.</li> <li>• Student count is increasing.</li> <li>• Building will be paid off this year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue efforts to provide competitive salary and benefits.</li> <li>• Work to be more responsive/proactive in procuring supplies to begin the school year.</li> </ul>

**Pillar #3: Operations**

- Do school leaders and members of the Board of Directors effectively manage the academy’s operations?
- Are there systems that make the school sustainable, even with teacher or principal turnover?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management company has made many positive changes to make BCMA more competitive with salary and benefits (including paid parental leave) compared to other local school districts.</li> <li>• Uses creative measures to recruit new staff including a paid referral process for current staff.</li> <li>• School provides supportive training and mentoring to new staff in effort to retain them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to recruit quality staff to fill the vacant positions within the school.</li> <li>• Stabilize school leadership.</li> </ul>

**Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance**

- Does the academy comply with all applicable laws and regulations?
- Does the academy comply with all contractual obligations as outlined in the charter contract?
- Does the Board of Directors provide competent stewardship and oversight of the academy?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board, management company, and school leadership report having a positive and transparent relationship.</li> <li>• The board members come with a variety of life experiences providing sound oversight for both the management company and the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue working to find new board candidates to fill the seven-member board.</li> <li>• Continue plans to review/revise the strategic plan to meet the school’s current needs.</li> </ul>
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<b><u>Contract Performance Report(s) Review</u></b>		
<b>Pillar</b>	<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Opportunities for Growth</b>
<b>Pillar #1: Academic Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The academy outperformed their composite district by 2% on the math state assessment (2021-22).</li> <li>• Pre-pandemic, in 2018-19, the academy outperformed their composite district in both the ELA and math state assessments.</li> <li>• Pre-pandemic, in 2018-19, the academy increased ELA achievement on the State assessment by 11%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Growth: Battle Creek Montessori did not meet the NWEA nor the M-STEP growth indicators in 2021-22. The academy was in the “approaching” level in regards to the NWEA reading and math School Conditional Growth Percentile (SCGP) for 2021-22. This was also true for the 2018-19 school year. The academy should focus on growth on NWEA, especially in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades.</li> <li>• Student Achievement: Battle Creek Montessori did not meet the NWEA nor the M-STEP achievement indicators in 2021-22. The academy should build off of the growth they experienced pre-pandemic in ELA to create a plan to increase proficiency levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battle Creek Montessori Academy has a very strong fiscal outlook.</li> <li>• The academy met all Key Performance Indicators (current ratio, change in fund balance ration, days cash on hand, enrollment, dent to asset ratio) in 2020-21 and 2021-22.</li> <li>• The academy has a very strong fund balance of 29% of revenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None at this time.</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #3: Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong leadership from the Educational Service Provider, especially with the current situation with leadership turnover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilization of staff in order to work towards a plan to improve academic outcomes as outlined above (see pillar #1).</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #4: Compliance &amp; Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battle Creek Montessori has been 100% compliant on all tasks for the 2018-19, 2020-21, and 2021-22 school years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to fill all vacant board positions.</li> <li>• Work to increase attendance at board meetings to 100%. In 2021-22, attendance was 88%.</li> </ul>

**Dr. Christopher White**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "W".

**Associate Director  
Ferris State University Charter Schools Office**