



---

Charter Schools Office

*Benton Harbor Charter School Academy*



Mid-Contract Review Visitation

February 6-7, 2017



**Report:** Mid-Contract Review Visitation  
**Academy:** Benton Harbor Charter School Academy  
**Visitation Dates:** February 6-7, 2017

The visitation occurred at the Benton Harbor Charter School Academy campus with four 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, 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 appreciate the open communication and transparency that was apparent with all we were able to interact with.

## Visitation Findings

<u>School Improvement Plan (SIP) and EdYes! School Systems Review</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<p><b>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are well aware of the SIP, as well as its goals and efforts for improvement.</li> <li>• The SIT owned the SIP.</li> <li>• A lot of training has taken place.</li> <li>• There is an emphasis to provide training that will help teachers to meet the cultural needs of the students. The teachers indicate that these trainings have made a profound impact on how they help students learn.</li> <li>• The reading interventionist is making a positive impact.</li> <li>• Focus on implementing initiatives directly related to academic performance on mandated assessments.</li> <li>• The ranking process that you use to evaluate your SIP appears to be a very good and useful process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently there is not a math interventionist in place. We suggest this be a priority position moving forward.</li> <li>• We suggest that as you evaluate your federally funded programs, continue to use student achievement data to determine what supports result in the largest academic gains (things vs personnel).</li> </ul> <p><b>EdYes! School Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to clearly identify pacing guides, class syllabuses, etc. as checked for evidences. Clearly delineate what skills and information are to be taught and learned at each grade level in each discipline.</li> <li>• We suggest that you clarify and document the steps used in your MTSS process.</li> </ul>

<p><b>EdYes! School Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving forward it is important to collect documentation for all evidences checked in this report (3 ring binder or google drive, etc.).</li> <li>• The walk through 10-point check list is valuable in determining if the teaching and learning initiatives are being implemented with fidelity by all staff.</li> <li>• The community engagement activities that are in place are helpful in meeting your mission.</li> <li>• Continue to determine if your new resource, Engage NY, is implemented with fidelity and results clearly indicate improved student achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a process for teachers to document and save best instructional activities that have been helpful in each lesson. This can and should be used as you move forward to improve teaching and learning. This information needs to be shared with new teachers as they join the BHCSA team.</li> </ul>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Facilities Review**

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tour of your facility and classrooms showed a very clean and well cared for learning environment. The classrooms are well equipped and attractive. There is good technology throughout the building. There are posters placed throughout the building that promote your goals and missions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None at this time.</li> </ul>

**Academy Culture Review**

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were very well behaved and compliant.</li> <li>• The staff is clearly aware of the need to understand the student’s culture in order to be able to help them.</li> <li>• It is important to continue to help your students know that their productivity is important for academic success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None at this time.</li> </ul>

**Mission Accomplishment**

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members and staff indicate that the mission is well embedded in all that you do.</li> <li>• “Persistence until I succeed” is a statement that you all live each day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the effort to review the mission and vision statements to determine if they are currently relevant.</li> </ul>

<u>Website</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of your website showed that you are providing essential information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a link to your school policies would be helpful.</li> <li>Providing a link to your current curriculum, pacing guides, and/or class syllabuses would be helpful.</li> </ul>

## Academy Internal Review

<u>Student Outcomes</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school leader is aware of student achievement outcomes. He is fully aware that there is a lot of work to do in regards to student achievement outcomes.</li> <li>The school leader has a high expectation that his staff is using the PLC process to analyze data to improve teaching and learning.</li> <li>The school leader is making a positive impact on the school culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to improve your processes to ensure that that all student's needs are being met.</li> <li>Pay close attention to your student/teacher ratio to ensure maximum student achievement.</li> </ul>

<u>Governance and Leadership</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The board appears to be very well engaged in the activities and outcomes of the Academy.</li> <li>The board appears to understand the proper roles of the Board and ESP.</li> <li>The board appreciates the help of FSU and would like to have more opportunities to connect with FSU-CSO personnel.</li> </ul>	<p>The Board should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to ask key questions about student outcomes, growth, achievement, and comparisons. It is important to face the brutal facts.</li> <li>Update their strategic plan. It would be helpful to include parents, staff and community in the planning process. It may be helpful to engage an outside consultant to guide this process.</li> <li>Review and evaluate the success and implementation of all federally funded activities.</li> <li>Consider implementing your idea of developing a student achievement sub-committee.</li> </ul>

## Resources and Support Systems

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It appears that there is a very good relationship with the ESP and the Board.</li> <li>• The ESP personnel care deeply about the school’s success.</li> <li>• The ESP works to provide high quality staff.</li> <li>• The ESP is doing what they can to recruit and retain good staff.</li> <li>• The ESP is working to provide adequate instructional resources.</li> <li>• The ESP is providing PD opportunities that are helpful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with the board and staff, work to understand current student academic performance in order to make necessary adjustments to ensure Benton Harbor Charter School Academy meets or exceeds FSU-CSO’s bottom line metrics.</li> <li>• Continue your efforts to prevent teacher burnout.</li> </ul>

## **CSO Review of Overall Performance for Benton Harbor Charter School Academy (BHCSA)**

### Contract Performance Report Review

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015-16 MSTEP proficiency data indicates the Academy is outperforming their composite district in both ELA and math.</li> <li>• 2015-16 NWEA MAP data indicates growth in reading at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in four out of seven grade levels.</li> <li>• Board members actively participate in CSO activities.</li> <li>• Zero board vacancies in 2015-16.</li> <li>• Epicenter compliance submissions were 100% on-time during 2014-15 and 2015-16.</li> <li>• Board attendance was 75% last year.</li> <li>• Only one board meeting was cancelled during the 2015-16 school year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015-16 MSTEP data indicates 0% proficiency in math for fifth and eighth grades.</li> <li>• 2015-16 NWEA MAP data indicates growth in math is below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in four out of seven grade levels.</li> <li>• 2015-16 NWEA MAP data indicates the Academy did not meet RIT achievement targets in math or reading at any grade level.</li> </ul>

### School Support Team (SST) Updates

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO interactions with Board, staff, and ESP have been positive and productive.</li> <li>• Academy is not currently ranked in the bottom five percent on the Top to Bottom List.</li> <li>• School Improvement Team honestly addressed academic deficiencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academy currently has Cohort 2015 Priority School Status.</li> <li>• The accuracy of Epicenter compliance submissions can be improved.</li> <li>• New staff members, curriculum, and programs will need to mesh so improved student academic outcomes are attained.</li> </ul>

## Overall Opportunities for Growth

- Implement Engage NY with fidelity and ensure connections are clear with MDE targets and daily classroom activities
- Prepare students for standardized assessments by building their capacities to apply academic knowledge and higher level thinking skills
- Increase the quality and quantity of student created deliverables

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

### BHCSA has been given the following Bottom Line Metrics:

1. The Academy cannot have a Top to Bottom ranking of 0-4% at the end of this contractual period. This metric supersedes 2-5 below. (1 metric)
2. M-STEP- The Academy's average proficiency percentages in both ELA and math must be improving (trending positively) at the end of this contractual period. The CSO will average tested grades proficiency percentages in ELA and math for the last 2-3 years and determine if the average proficiency percentages are improving, declining, or stagnant. (2 metrics)
3. MSTEP- The Academy's average proficiency rates must out-perform the local district determined by the CSO by the end of this contractual period. The CSO will average tested grades proficiency percentages in ELA and math for the last contractual year for both the PSA and local traditional district and determine if the PSA percentages are higher. (2 metrics)
4. NWEA MAP- The Academy's conditional growth index must be positive in both math and ELA at the end of this contractual period. The CSO will review the most current MAP results to determine if the PSA's conditional growth index is at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (a positive growth index) for both reading and math. (2 metrics)
5. NWEA MAP- The Academy's Spring Achievement Percentiles must be trending positively in both reading and math. The CSO will review the most current MAP results and compare the reading and math Spring Achievement Percentiles with the previous 2-3 years for each grade. The CSO will determine how many grade levels indicate improving, declining, or stagnant percentiles in reading and math. The PSA must have a majority of percentiles identified as improving. (2 metrics)

The expectation is that the school will meet all of the above metrics. The CSO will review and determine how many of the metrics were met by the PSA and base the recommendation to reauthorize on the performance outcomes. If the school has a Top to Bottom ranking of 0-4% at the end of the contractual period, they will not be reauthorized.

The CSO may have other academic and non-academic expectations as more information becomes available.

Signed James K. Scholten  
CSO Visitation Chair

Ronald S. Schneider  
CSO Associate Director