

# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

## CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

Review Type: Virtual Mid-Contract

Academy Name: Clara B. Ford Academy

Date(s): January 9, 2025

### FINAL REPORT

The Review occurred virtually with Clara B. Ford Academy and included 6 members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) Review team: Chris Loiselle – Director, Peg Baker – Associate Director, Beth Taylor – School Support Specialist, Sharon Hopper – Compliance & Governance Specialist, Linda Bouman – Field Representative, and Jim Scholten – Reauthorization Review Chairperson. The team had the opportunity to meet with, and interview, multiple stakeholder groups, including the School Leadership Team and Governing Board members. 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

- Are classroom interactions cooperative and conducive to learning? Is there a structure approach to managing student behavior throughout the school?
- Do teachers provide clear learning goals leading to purposeful instruction?
- Are a variety of instructional strategies materials used to meet diverse needs?
- 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?
- Are students given the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills?
- Has the school identified growth initiatives that appropriately address the needs of their student population?
- Does the school prioritize continuous improvement and monitor progress toward goals?
- Is there evidence of a positive school climate focused on student learning?

#### Areas of Strength

##### **Academic Progress:**

##### **Behavior Management**

- Common school-wide SEL goals.
- Restorative Practices- 2 years of training and restorative circles.
- Students request restorative circles with peer to peer, peer to teacher, and peer to VM staff.
- Monarch Room is available for students as needed.
- Panorama surveys are used to determine students' attitudes.
- Variety of seating and grouping options to meet students' needs.

#### Opportunities for Growth

- Continue to find ways to get students back on track despite numerous absences.
- Continue to find ways to Include student self-monitoring and goal setting.
- Continue to work on ways to collaborate with community partners.
- Continue to recruit board candidates with a strong educational background.
- Continue attending Angie Irwin webinars to build board academic capacity.
- Continue to consistently train staff with the behavioral and academic programs that are vital to the academy.

- Love and Logic- same rules posted in every classroom with new training happening this year.
- Trauma Informed Education Practices with training in August and refreshers throughout the year.
- Mike is becoming a Love and Logic trainer and hopes to train all staff, so it is consistent among school and Vista Maria.

**Approach to Instruction**

- Variety of whole group and small group instruction.
- Uses IXL that helps to determine and fill gaps in instruction.
- Multiple adults helping students.
- Use NWEA and IXL to determine needs.
- Combine classes to help get required credits.
- Credit recovery program.
- Extra time with Academic Coach, tutors, and teachers, school leader.
- Constant monitoring of student progress.
- Mastery of Skills- showing growth through IXL and using online resources.
- Opened an Academic Success Center.
- Teachers meet with students to determine goals each quarter.

**Assessment Purpose**

- Use Exact Path and IXL helps to determine areas of needs quickly.
- Teachers use exit tickets to help determine understanding.

**Support for Student Learning**

- Academic coaches help students and teachers.
- Using training in AI to help fill gaps.
- Academic Coach visits classrooms weekly for learning walks, and coaches teachers based on observations.
- Every student has a team of people, including therapists, to help service social emotional needs and to help with transitioning and use individual orientation to help with the adjustment.
- Weekly Assemblies and monthly celebrations.
- Wall of Fame for academic progress.
- Quarterly award assemblies.
- Shoutouts during morning announcements.

**Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency**

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

**Areas of Strength**

**Financial Sustainability**

- Positive relationship and support with CSPartners Financial Team and Pupil Accounting at Wayne RESA.
- Financial Committee actively looks for opportunities for grants and to find ways to be fiscally sustainable.

**Opportunities for Growth**

- Continue to monitor the student enrollment and adjust the budget as needed to be sustainable.
- Continue to work on developing grant funding opportunities through new grants or grants specific to strict discipline academies (23a as an example).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee and Board President and Treasurer meet bi-monthly to assure that the school is sustainable.</li> <li>• CSPartners has a grant manager that pays attention to any new legislation and works closely with Wayne RESA.</li> <li>• The Board has a strong understanding of the academy’s finances and processes.</li> <li>• The Board annually looks at the 5-year outlook and adjust as needed.</li> <li>• The Board adjusts well to all the variables that affect the financial viability of the academy.</li> <li>• The Board treasurer has an extensive financial background.</li> <li>• Fund balance is healthy at approximately 45% of annual revenues.</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
<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSPartners has a Human Resources Department that helps to recruit teachers through Prism, Frontline and Indeed.</li> <li>• Gave staff holiday bonuses and gift cards to help with retention.</li> <li>• Staff that are dedicated to the mission of the school.</li> <li>• Numerous little things that happen throughout the day including music, celebrations, positivity announcements help to make the culture positive.</li> <li>• School leaders meet weekly to discuss instruction and use as a base Professional Development.</li> <li>• CSPartners meets with the school leader weekly to support with any needs.</li> <li>• Teachers are evaluated with the Danielson system 3 times per year.</li> <li>• CSPartners holds meetings every other month with school leaders to help with training for staff evaluations and other needs.</li> <li>• CSPartners has a school operations specialist to help make sure on time compliance with Epicenter.</li> <li>• Welcoming community for students and staff with numerous adults to maintain a positive culture.</li> <li>• CSPartners created a template for the Leader Report for the Board meetings so that all the information looks consistent from leader to leader, including the measures and progress toward goals, student count.</li> <li>• Board President meets monthly with the school leader to clarify any questions about the report.</li> <li>• Vista Maria representatives attend each board meeting to provide updates that may affect the academy.</li> <li>• The Board president meets with Vista Maria twice annually to gain understanding of student enrollment and programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership and the Board should revisit the Academy’s mission and vision to ensure they align with current practices, as needed.</li> <li>• The Board is encouraged to continue collaborating with Vista Maria to improve all programming to better support the school leaders</li> <li>• To build and maintain relationships, CSPartners is encouraged to be more consistent with the Director of School Leadership position.</li> <li>• In the last 4 years there have been 4 leaders, CS Partners is encouraged to support the current school leader to maintain consistency for students, staff, and programming.</li> <li>• Maintain the positive relationship between Clara B. Ford Academy and Vista Maria.</li> </ul>

**Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance**

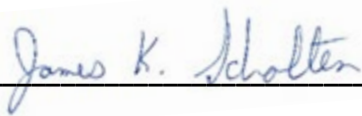
- Does the academy comply with all applicable laws and regulations?
- Does the academy comply with all contractual obligations as outlined in the charter contract?
- Does the Board of Directors provide competent stewardship and oversight of the academy?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<p><b>Compliance &amp; Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Board supports the whole child and child first overall approach.</li> <li>● The School Leader provides a report every month at the Board meeting that includes enrollment, academic data, and goals progress.</li> <li>● CSPartners provides a monthly financial statement at the Board meetings.</li> <li>● Positive relationship between Board, CSPartners, and Vista Maria.</li> <li>● CSPartners focuses on compliance with all legal requirements.</li> <li>● The Board attends Professional Development webinars and incorporates the information into their governance practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a succession plan for Board members.</li> <li>● Continue to take advantage of Board PD opportunities.</li> </ul>

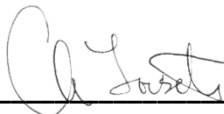
**Contract Performance Report(s) Review and Financial Scorecard**

Pillar	Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<b>Pillar #1: Academic Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information not available before the 2024-2025 school year. Newly designed academic support indicators will be tracked starting 2024-2025.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information not available prior to the 2024-2025 school year.</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Healthy fund balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued research into additional grant funding opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #3: Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting or exceeding all areas except for building safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Building safety is reported as ‘approaching’ - should review areas of safety and work on improving in areas identified</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar #4: Compliance &amp; Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting or exceeding in all compliance categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



**CSO Review Chair**



**CSO Director**