



Charter Schools Office

Report: Mid-Contract

Academy: Clara B. Ford Academy

Date: November 11 & 12, 2019

The visitation occurred at Clara B. Ford 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 also able to tour the facility. We appreciate the open communication and transparency from the academy team.

Visitation Findings

School Improvement Processes and Student Outcomes	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Improvement Plan is well done and clearly articulates what the school is focusing on and it addresses Ferris' Measurable goals.• The Monarch room is being utilized frequently by students and undergoes consistent improvements as needed by the students.• The school's end of year report gives clear growth in all goal areas as supported by data.• The school does an excellent job using data/research/stakeholder input to develop new initiatives or to track current programs/processes in place. The End of Year Report "Progress Towards Treatment Goals" does a very good job showing and explaining the progress being made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue your efforts to implement academic goals for your students like Goal 3 – Students will show an increase in reading comprehension skills, that will assist them in being successful when leaving Clara B. Ford Academy.• Continue your efforts to engage Vista Maria staff on your Clara B. Ford committees to assist in improving communication and relations.

- The leadership team and staff are fully aware of the data that is being collected for each of their goals and are consistently looking for ways to improve.
- The school uses student focus groups to help determine how to improve student outcomes, especially as it relates to their social emotional learning.
- The school has implemented shortened class periods and a shortened school day to better meet the needs of the students.
- It is positive to see the school has developed a social emotional class in house to help students with soft skills.
- The school is now implementing strategies to improve student reading comprehension which is being taught in all content areas.
- The school has implemented the “Plesco Process” that tracks student growth within units of study, which is then shared individually with the students.
- The school implements SSP (Student Success Plans) involving all stakeholders that are individualized, mindfully designed intervention utilized both within and outside the classroom, to help a student be successful in school (academically and behaviorally).
- Trauma informed teaching seems to be firmly in place and staff seem well trained in implementing this strategy/process in the classroom. This includes a clear on board process for new teachers.
- The school has clear coordination/collaboration between all committees and reports.
- The school utilizes a universal lesson plan template that is submitted and reviewed by leadership.
- Progress has been made to communicate and collaborate with VM staff.

Academy Culture Review

Observations

Opportunities for Growth

- It is clear that there is a spirit of teamwork with all staff, including with leadership, resulting in a very supportive, “family like” environment.
- Staff self-care is a main priority at Clara B. Ford. This has been implemented based on research and has proven to be a very positive support for the staff. This self-care includes but is not limited to providing a self-care handbook for staff that provides a variety of strategies, each teacher has a self-care buddy, PD every six weeks that focuses on activities that promotes culture, and a reduced school day.
- The school developed a school calendar that gives teachers an additional day or two off each month to allow teachers to recharge.
- The teachers have a clear passion to teach this at-risk population.
- The school is well staffed providing a safe and secure environment where learning can take place.
- The Monarch room provides consistent self-care for students resulting in a positive and safe culture. This includes providing students with coping strategies in the classroom before leaving to the Monarch room. Data is consistently tracked on this room to continue to improve ways to assist students.
- There is a collaborative culture between the school leadership and the ESP.
- The staff has a clear understanding of the unique qualities needed to meet the needs of the student population.
- There is a sense of appreciation presented by staff and leadership. It was evident the staff feels valued by the leadership.

- Continue to identify and cultivate relationships with Vista Maria.
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of building procedures through the use of surveys, data and research.

Mission Accomplishment

Observations

- The mission is embedded in everything they do as evidenced by their current initiatives/plans/processes.
- The board articulates the mission at every board meeting and often uses the mission to guide them in their conversation/decision making.

Opportunities for Growth

- Consider opportunities to engage the students in the mission/vision/core values. For example, the SEL class may be an avenue to achieve this. Explore how what they are studying is an implementation of the mission/vision/core values. Maybe, explain that in future jobs they may be asked to follow/engage in the mission/vision/core values of the entity they work for.

Governance and Leadership

Observations

- The board has a positive working relationship with CS Partners and believes they do what they can to help the school be successful.
- The board has a positive working relationship with the school leadership. The board president meets with the school leader frequently and the leader also presents information at board meetings, which includes bringing other staff to present, which the board appreciates.
- The board believes the school leader has been very transparent with the board regarding what is happening in the school and the school's needs.
- The board continues to partner with the Vista Maria leadership team. The president has met with the VP of Organizational and Individual Engagement one-on-one and will be meeting with the CEO after the first of the year.
- The board feels they are in a "better place" with Vista Maria, especially with the change of the new leadership.
- The board members are consistent with their mission of serving the unique needs of their student population and the level of creativity the school implements to adjust to their needs, especially when it comes to their social emotional well-being.

Opportunities for Growth

- Continue efforts to improve communication and relationship with Vista Maria.
- Continue to visit your current reserve funds and how you can use those funds to assist in meeting the goals within your strategic plan, for example, the need for additional space.
- Continue to monitor the potential increase in student enrollment due to the completion of the new building at Vista Maria.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board is well aware of the current space issues of Clara B. Ford and is working collectively with the ESP and Vista Maria to plan ahead for potential future growth. • The board president has attended the last two meetings of the VM sub-committee, Program Evaluation and Planning Committee (PEPC). The president reinforced the importance of evaluating the space needs of the CBF girls, especially in light of VM adding a new residence hall to accommodate girls that have been involved in Human Trafficking. 	
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Resources and Support Systems

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS Partners provides support in finding and retaining teachers. • CS Partners provides adequate financial information and support in guiding the Board. • CS Partners provides a board liaison to the school to insure student and staff needs are being met. • The board has a positive relationship with the ESP. • The leadership team has partnered with other entities, such as the ISD and Wayne State University, to assist them with research, data and other areas as needed. • The school leaders partner with area businesses to assist with teacher self-care. • Each teacher is provided a trauma informed teaching coach who assists them in setting goals in working with students with trauma, observes them in the classroom, and assists them in monitoring their progress. • CS Partners provide support in professional development for staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time.

<u>Facilities Review</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility appears adequate to meet the needs of the current student population/enrollment. • The school has displayed student work to celebrate them and their accomplishments. • Campus presents itself as safe and well-kept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with Vista Maria and the board to monitor and address the current learning space and the development of a plan should enrollment increase. • Continue to work on addressing the space dedicated to the 5-8 student population.
<u>Website/Social Media Review</u>	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The web site provides necessary and up -to-date information. • The school has an app they use to update individuals with necessary information, such as school closings. • Due to the unique student population the school does not use social media, however, they have developed a newsletter that is shared with the houses at Vista Maria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to use social media where appropriate to interact with stakeholders and recruit staff.

CSO Review of Overall Performance for Clara B Ford Academy

<u>Contract Performance Report Review</u>	
Observations (2017-19 data)	Opportunities for Growth (2017-19 data)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very consistent enrollment- 123-135 students for 6 years • Majority of students are in Grades 9-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Board assessments produce low results • Contractual Goals remain decreasing time out of classroom, development and integration of Social Emotional Learning, and increasing reading comprehension skills

<u>School Support Team (SST) and Field Representative (FR) Updates</u>	
Observations (2019-current data)	Opportunities for Growth (2019-current data)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No academic, governance, or operational concerns at this time • Larger than normal fund balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss needs and possible initiatives to spend some of the fund balance to benefit students and staff

Overall Opportunities for Growth

- Continue your solid programming and providing your crucial services

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

For Clara B. Ford Academy:

- Meet or exceed FSU CSO/CBF's "Progress Towards Treatment Goals"
- 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.

Signed



CSO Visitation Chair



CSO Associate Director