

Charter Schools Office

*Creative Technologies
Academy*



Mid-Contract Review
November 21-22, 2016

Report: Mid-Contract Review Visitation
Academy: Creative Technologies Academy
Visitation Dates: November 21-22, 2016

The visitation occurred at the Creative Technologies Academy Campus with three 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 (SIT). The team was able to tour all of the facilities 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 –

School Systems and School Improvement Plan (SIP) Review

We had the opportunity to review in depth the documents with school leaders and staff.

SIP Review with the SIT

It is clear that the staff is well aware of the SIP – its goals and efforts for improvement.

The strategies that the team was very much engaged with were:

- The Gradual Release Model of Instruction. Teachers model the learning objective then have the whole class model what they've learned, then the student's model with a partner what they have learned and then students model individually what they have learned.
- The learning expectations are intentional – Every classroom has the “Learning Targets” and “Success Criteria” clearly posted and followed in each classroom.
- Locus of Control – an effort of shifting from the teacher being responsible for the students' learning to the student being responsible for their learning.
- Student Data Notebooks – each student keeps a notebook of their assessment results and learning goals. They review this with their teachers on a regular basis which causes them to readjust their learning/assessment targets if necessary. These are also used for student lead conferences with their parents. This helps students to take control of their learning outcomes.
- The teachers are pleased with the addition of the “Moby Max” online math program they have implemented.
- It is also clear that the staff through their PLC meetings use the students NWEA results to identify learning targets.
- The goals are set high, seeking to have 85% of the students meeting the proficiency targets.

EdYes! School Systems Review

- Our review of the EdYes! Report did not find any major discrepancies. The evidence provided are consistent with what we observed in our conversations with school leaders, staff, board members, and our classroom observations.

Opportunities for Growth

In regards to the SIP we make the following suggestions:

- Identify a trend line for your “Measurable Objectives”. Having 85% of you students meeting a proficiency level by 2024 seems pretty long range. What are your expectations on a yearly basis that will ensure that you will meet your desired outcome?
- Continue to ensure that all staff that are needing to be impacted by the implementation of a particular strategy are properly trained and that you are evaluating if the strategy is effective.

In regards to the EdYes! Report we make the following suggestions:

- Continue your efforts to clarify and align your curriculum. You currently are referencing your curriculum and in talking about that you are using the Oakland ISD curriculum document for writing, the “Literacy by Design” curriculum as defined by this textbook resource for reading and the math textbook “Math Expressions” defined the curriculum for math. You have established pacing guides and curriculum maps in place which is good. You also are engaged with a consultant to help you better align and clarify your curriculum. Keep up those efforts.
- You have referenced your MTSS process. Your PLC/Building minutes indicate that you have a process in place. You were able to provide us with your plan for reading. You are working on your plan for math. Continue those efforts.

Facilities Review

A tour of your facilities and classroom visits clearly show that they are well kept, safe and conducive to learning.

Opportunities for Growth

None at this time.

Academy Culture

- It is clear that all staff understand that your students are making growth BUT you are not satisfied.
- You are in alignment in understanding that your main focus going forward is in the areas of reading and math.
- You have a Board that is engaged and focused on student achievement and work to make sure they support the students and staff.
- There is a collaborative culture. One evidence of this is that in your staff lounge you have a “Parking Lot” poster that allows all staff to make comments and share concerns or ideas on a regular basis. These postings are noticed and address by the school leaders.
- When we asked the school leaders and SIT members what we could expect to see in all classrooms the responses were similar. The items stated were what we observed as we visited

classrooms. Ex: Gradual Release, Clear Learning Targets and Success Criteria, good classroom management.

- When we asked what are the qualities of a successful teacher the responses of caring, collaborative, open-minded, purposeful, approachable, patient, and concerned about student learning were evident.
- The students were very well behaved. They understood what they're responsibilities are and carried them out.
- You share information with all stakeholders as evidenced by your communications to staff and parents. Your "Town Hall" meetings seem to be a great way for your parents to gain understanding and give feedback.
- You have given clear expectations for you teachers as evidenced in your "Faculty Manual" "2016-17 School-wide initiatives". The concepts listed were observed clearly.
- When asked about what your emerging future looks like you were able to articulate that your focus will be on student learning, you will continue to work at getting better, you will have a school with rigor, and you will be producing successful citizens.

Opportunities for Growth

None at this time.

Mission Accomplishment

When asked "How do you ensure your mission, vision, and core values are embedded in what you do?" the responses included:

- Posted everywhere.
- Our Character education program is consistent with our core values.
- We emphasize them a lot.
- We review them at our Town Hall meetings.
- Our teacher evaluation process supports what we say we are doing.
- Your School Board sees these lived out in what the staff is doing.

Opportunities for Growth

- The School Board's Strategic Plan is in need of updating. This is an opportunity to intentionally ensure that the goals reflect the mission, vision, and core values of the Academy.

Website

A review of your website showed that you are providing essential information. You have a curriculum guide which gives a summary of your curriculum that is helpful for parents.

Opportunities for Growth

None at this time.

Academy Internal Review

Student Outcomes

- Your responses support what we observed and heard. You are aware of your achievement data and trends. You are working to make progress where needed.

Governance and Leadership

- Your responses indicate that the following are in place. Our observations support these.
 - Your Board operates effectively.
 - They subscribe to the National Charter Schools Institute Board Policies. This allows the Board to assure that they have effective, best policies in place to give direction to the Academy.
 - The Board has a workable number of members and meets regularly to conduct academy business.
 - The Board allows the school leadership and staff to manage day-to-day operations.
 - The Board works to allow for staff collaboration.
 - The board supports the many efforts used to help all stakeholders to be engaged.
 - It is apparent in our observations that all parties are making a gallant effort to follow the quote “Let’s do it because it’s the right thing to do and it’s the right thing for kids, not because I said so.”

Resources and Support Systems

- Your responses indicate that the following are in place. Our observations support these.
 - Quality staff are in place.
 - The Academy is always working to make the most of its available resources.
 - Facilities are well kept.
 - There is a wide range of media and informational resources that support the educational programs.
 - The Academies technology infrastructure support the teaching and learning needs of the students.
 - The Academy provides support services to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of the students.

Opportunities for Growth

- As mentioned before it would be helpful for the Board to update the strategic plan keeping each of these areas in mind so that good quality continues.

CSO Review of Overall Performance for Creative Technologies Academy (CTA)

Contract Performance Report Review

CSO Points of Pride for CTA

- Academic performance continues to meet or exceed FSU's expectations in both MSTEP, SAT, and MAP assessments
- CTA is our only fully self-managed PSA
- CTA appears to be financially sound at this time

CSO Area of Concern for CTA

- Board attendance averaged 70% for 2015-16

School Support Team (SST) Updates

CSO Points of Pride for CTA

- CTA has been designated a "Green" school based on academic, governance, and compliance performance
- CTA has had 100% compliance for 15 years

CSO Area of Concern for CTA

- CSO has no SST area of concern for CTA at this time

Opportunities for Growth

- CSO would like to see Board attendance improve for 2016-17
- CSO recommends the CTA Board continue to explore ways to build a gymnasium

CSO Expectations in Consideration for Recommendation of Reauthorization

At this time:

- **The CSO expects overall academic and non-academic performance will continue to meet or exceed standards.**
- **The CSO has no additional expectations at this time.**

Signed James K. Scholten
CSO Visitation Chair

Signed Ronald S. Schneider
CSO Associate Director

Date: December 12, 2016

Date: December 12, 2016