

ACADEMY INTERNAL REVIEW



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

MID-CONTRACT AND REAUTHORIZATION REVIEW





Charter Schools Office Vision, Mission, and Core Values

VISION

Ferris State University will authorize public school academies that promise to transform the lives of students by demonstrating high-quality performance.

MISSION

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office focuses on student success and continuous improvement through quality oversight, professional learning opportunities, and relevant resources for its authorized public school academies.

CORE VALUES

The core values of the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office are the foundation of our organization's culture. Our values are static, unchanging and non-negotiable, built from the belief that learning is a lifelong process and *all* students can learn.

WE VALUE:

Student Learning

As a higher education institution, student learning is in our DNA; we see the opportunities created when students succeed, and we focus our oversight and support efforts on continual student success.

A Collaborative Working Environment

By supporting each other and building partnerships, we encourage a sense of community through cooperation, teamwork and consensus building with our stakeholders.

Diversity

Recognizing that stakeholders are made up of diverse populations, we honor diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures.

Opportunities

Through the work we do as a charter school authorizer, we help create learning opportunities and environments by lending support for professional growth and development.

Excellence

Committed to superior results, we engage in practices that produce the highest quality outcomes in all our endeavors.

Accountability

Accountability leads to academic progress—we believe in being held accountable for our work as an authorizer as deeply as we believe in holding all stakeholders accountable for their work.

Integrity and Trust

Our actions are guided by fairness and respect through transparency, effective communication and the building of positive relationships with each other and our stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

This document is one of several key documents for those academies undergoing either a Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review. These reviews are requirements as part of the charter contract and are essential to the Reauthorization process. **If this is an Internal Review for a Reauthorization onsite or virtual review, this document, when completed and submitted, also serves at the Academy's reauthorization application.** The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) views these review processes as part of an ongoing evaluation of quality, and not as a singular event.

The **Academy Internal Review** focuses on the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP), Contract Performance Report (CPR), internal data review information, and initiatives, policies, and procedures generated by staff and stakeholder meetings. These documents and procedures provide an opportunity for the Academy's school improvement team and other key stakeholders to self-reflect on some of the key indicators of quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. The CSO firmly holds that quality organizations engage in ongoing conversations regarding continuous quality improvement in all aspects of performance. This review must be based on staff, board, and stakeholder discussion and input to ensure accuracy and agreement on current and future activities, policies, and procedures.

The majority of the information the CSO team will be reviewing and discussing before, during, and after the review will focus on the following categories, all related to the FSU CSO pillars for successful academies:

1. Review of prior Mid-Contract and Reauthorization Review
2. Academic Progress (Pillar #1)
 - a. Academic Data
 - b. Curriculum, Instruction, and Interventions
 - c. The MICIP Process and Results
3. Fiscal Solvency (Pillar #2)
4. Operations (Pillar #3)
5. Compliance & Governance (Pillar #4)

INSTRUCTIONS

The Academy Internal Review is a series of questions that need to be discussed and researched by the school staff. When the process is completed, the Charter School Office (CSO) should have a basic knowledge of strengths and weaknesses the school identifies related to the five categories listed on the previous page. The school's responses to the questions need to be short and to the point (bullet points, short statements, examples of evidence, graphics, etc.). The quality of the answers, not the quantity, is your goal. You will need to review and reflect on past performance and objectively determine current plans and improvements.

Before your team begins to answer the questions in this document, they need to review your School Improvement Process including your Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) documents, your local building/district improvement procedures, Strategic Plans, specific building goals, Contract Performance Report, and any other relevant supporting documents. Strategies to support or bolster efforts in the categories are also appropriate to include in your responses and should be based on documentation.

The completed Internal Review should be submitted to the CSO, via Epicenter, by the date determined in collaboration with the Review Chair (two weeks prior to the visitation). The submission must be a discussion item at a Board of Directors meeting and include the signature of the board president assuring that the full board had a chance to review. Questions regarding the review process or the *Academy Internal Review* document should be directed to CSO Review Chair, Jim Scholten, via email (JamesScholten@ferris.edu) or phone (616) 430-0891.

1. Prior Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review

After your last Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review, you received a Final Report, which included a section titled “Opportunities for Growth”. **Briefly list** the “Opportunities for Growth” you addressed and connected activities, procedures, or policies that have been initiated.

Most of the “Opportunities for Growth” began with encouraging statements to “continue” various initiatives and practices we already have in place. We will be ready to speak to each of those during the visit. The other “Opportunities for Growth” are addressed below.

- “Explore MICIP and begin to familiarize yourselves with the timelines and requirements”. Since your virtual visit last year, our team has participated in MICIP training and worked directly with our county MICIP field representative. We were able to input our district continuous improvement plan into the new system and were one of the first submissions in the county, completing it over a 6-week span. Additionally, we found great benefit to the system and our ability to align our school improvement goals with our authorizer goals for improvement.
- “Explore opportunities to utilize the available building on-site for career development purposes”. Since your virtual visit last year, we have taken several forward steps on this project. We have cleaned the interior of the building and removed the large mounds of soil surrounding the exterior of the building, in preparation for future construction. We have also received Board approval for concept-development and have begun moving forward with architecture/engineering design schematics with Lee Stevens Architecture. At our October board meeting, a resolution was approved requesting a contract amendment with Ferris State for the future use of this building. We are excited for the future opportunities that will be available to Voyageur students.

2. Academic Progress (Pillar #1)

Academic Data

Based on the team’s review of your current academic assessment data, identify 3-5 areas of strength and 3-5 areas of improvement. For each area of improvement, list at least one current initiative that addresses that area (if available).

Most of the academic data notes are the same as your last virtual visit, due to lack of valid student assessment data (due to the pandemic). The 2019-2020 fall-to-winter NWEA MAP data is our most recent, valid, student growth data. While we are

disappointed to not have more current data, we will use the data we do have to best respond to this question and look forward to updating you with this year's data, at a later time.

Areas of Strength:

1. In the recent (April 2021) U.S. News and World Report school ranking, that utilizes multiple data points, including SAT scores, graduation rates, college readiness, percentage of students who enroll in college, reading and math proficiency, and reading and math performance, Voyageur College Prep was ranked the #1 Open Enrollment High School in the city of Detroit. Last year, we were #2. Two years ago, we were #7.
2. Our special education program and students have improved enough to no longer carry a targeted support designation in K-8. The improvement is even seen in MAP testing, where the special education cohort gained an average of 13 points in RIT scores for both reading and math, from Fall 2019 to Winter 2020.
3. When looking at our average growth from Fall 2019 MAP to Winter 2020 MAP, our ELL subgroup outperformed the projected growth target at every grade level, K-8, except 7th grade, which missed by one point.

Areas of Improvement:

1. Increase MSTEP proficiency across all grade levels and outperform the Composite district

Strategies – Implement a comprehensive MTSS program that provides targeted students with additional math and reading instruction, daily, in addition to their core instruction. Another opportunity for remediation, reinstruction, or targeted support lies in our free after-school tutoring program. Multiple initiatives are in place to retain high-quality, impactful teachers to ensure we are delivering effective tier 1 instruction. We utilize a weekly lesson plan submission/review process to ensure proper curriculum standards are being taught and to offer individualized teacher support, as needed. The TRG lesson planning tool allows us to monitor the timeliness and frequency in which each standard is taught.

2. Achieve 30 points of growth from PSAT9 to PSAT10 and PSAT10 to SAT in Math and EBRW

Strategies – Each high school student is required to take a semester long Seminar class that is heavily focused on PSAT/SAT test taking strategies, skill development, and exposure to testing items/questions. We provide a Saturday SAT Prep program for the 8 weeks leading in to SAT testing that provides multiple practice SAT tests, tracking of student progress, and instruction on content. Professional development has been provided to all teachers on incorporating PSAT/SAT prep into daily lessons. We have added a teacher bonus structure that is heavily tied to this growth goal.

3. Consistently out-perform the resident district in SAT

Strategies - Each high school student is required to take a semester long Seminar class that is heavily focused on PSAT/SAT test taking strategies, skill development, and exposure to testing items/questions. We provide a Saturday SAT Prep program for the 8 weeks leading in to SAT testing that provides multiple practice SAT tests, tracking of student progress, and instruction on content. Professional development has been provided to all teachers on incorporating PSAT/SAT prep into daily lessons.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Interventions

- a. Briefly describe Tier I instruction at your academy (curriculum, lesson planning, in-class support to students, etc.).

Tier I instruction consists of utilizing the TRG Dashboard, which includes the TRG Pacing Guides for Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations, Lesson Plan Creator, and Data Dashboard, to design engaging lessons that are differentiated and meet the needs of all learners. The Data Dashboard includes classroom level student data in NWEA's MAP and Illuminate data, to assist in driving differentiated instruction into the lesson planning process. Teachers are able to see where they need to go with GLCEs and then choose the best path for their individual students. Further support is built into the K-5 daily schedule to include dedicated time and resources to intervention for all students in the areas of math and ELA. In grades 6-8, additional supports are offered including an Academic Support or PSAT Prep class period. In grades 9-12, there are additional supports for students including after school tutoring. Lastly, we have secured support resources to assist with learning gaps across grade and student levels in reading and math, including Do The Math, EBLI, Eureka Equip, and ALEKS.

- b. What school-wide instructional initiatives are occurring in your academy? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness?

We have many school-wide instructional initiatives to address learning loss and learning gaps. In addition to the design of our Tier I instruction, we also have our Tier II supports with small group, coaching, and co-teaching in ELL, MTSS, and Special Education. Some of the school programs being used to learning gaps, across grade and student levels in reading and math, include Do The Math, EBLI, Eureka Equip, and ALEKS. Teacher-focused instructional initiatives include using “Do Nows” and EXIT tickets to gain insight and daily feedback on mastery of learning. This information is being utilized with the purpose of guiding and adjusting lessons in real time to ensure the teaching and learning process can be optimally intentional. In terms of evidence of effectiveness, while we do not have student achievement data to analyze yet, we have observed in lesson plans, meetings, and observations that

instructional improvement is taking place. As student level data becomes available, we will continue to monitor for evidence of effectiveness.

- c. How is the school meeting the needs of at-risk students and special education students? Describe your intervention structure and programs. What evidence do you have that your intervention system is working?

Voyageur Academy utilizes the MTSS framework to address the needs of students with a deficit in Math and Reading. These students are identified using data from NWEA assessments, bi-weekly assessment data, Illuminate 30-day assessment data, and input from teachers. Once identified, students are placed into subject-based groups with an interventionist for their grade level and are provided with intervention on a 6-week cycle. During that cycle, data is collected so that the team may review progress and make a decision on whether the student matriculates from the program, moves forward with child study, or requires further evaluation. Determination is based on the next round of data from MAP, biweekly assessments, report card markings, and teacher and team input. For all grade levels, after-school tutoring is used to provide additional instruction to students who require it and credit recovery opportunities exist for those who need it. Our MTSS process is also used to inform our student referral process. Specific to special education students, our team checks their GPA every two weeks and makes calls home for those scholars falling below a 2.0. We also give quarterly progress reports to parents, along with report cards, to show progress towards special education goals. The team continually reviews goals and accommodations with teachers and parents to make sure they are implemented in the classroom and determine if these interventions are working. If these interventions are not working, they can be updated/changed throughout the year, not just at an annual IEP meeting.

MICIP & Strategic Planning

- a. Briefly describe your continuous improvement process and involvement of stakeholders.

In the initial creation of our plan through the MICIP platform, our school improvement chairs met to review, analyze, and discuss each step of the process. We broke it up into bite size pieces to work through first as leaders and then with our stakeholder teams. We reviewed, analyzed, and discussed Voyageur's data in each step of the process. We began with discovery of data and then moved through analyzing the data, developing our goal, building our strategies, and creating the activities. Additionally, we shared the district plan and process with the entire faculty at the start of the school year and have been meeting with the SIP team on a monthly agenda. The team is now in the implementation phase of

the process and will continue to meet regularly to initiate and monitor the activities as appropriate.

- b. What did you learn about your academy from the “Data Analysis” and “Setting Goals” process within MICIP?

The MICIP process was extremely engaging. The structured organization moved us through the planning and development seamlessly. We did have some challenges with the technical aspect of learning a new system, but overall found it to be improved from the previous method. During the process, we saw data points that were both similar and different between the K-8 and the 9-12. We had great discussions at the stakeholder level, which then carried over into our SIP leadership meetings. We were able to see a clear goal for the entire district and then break that into appropriate strategies and activities for each subsequent building level. What we found from our data analysis was that our student engagement was reflective of relational capacity between students and teachers. Throughout our district, we want to see this relationship improved so we can see increased student engagement. We will measure that improvement with the corresponding grade level assessments of NWEA, PSAT, and SAT.

- c. Highlight any specific strategies or activities you would like the CSO Review Team to observe or look for during their visit. What impact have they had on student growth and/or achievement?

The activities we would like to highlight with the CSO Review Team include the implementation of our Teach Like a Champion, TLAC, strategies. We have an activity to implement TLAC professional development, a calendar designating a monthly TLAC strategy to focus on, and monitoring activities, relative to those strategies. We have not seen a direct impact on student assessment data at this point in the school year, however, we are seeing the growth in teaching and learning through observation. The CSO Review Team should be able to observe these strategies in classrooms throughout the building both in behavior and culture, as well as engaging academics.

3. Fiscal Solvency (Pillar #4)

List your main financial challenges and any current activities that address the concerns. Also include any current or long-term projects or purchases involving a substantial increase in expenditures (examples: curriculum purchase, facility improvements, purchase of technology, etc.).

We do not have any current financial challenges. Over the past two years, we have leveraged ESSER-funding to become a one-to-one Chromebook device per student

campus. We have also leveraged those funds to purchase a new K-8 Social Studies curriculum (SAVVAS), aligned with the new state standards. Finally, we have taken preliminary steps towards a renovation project of our 6101 Cook Street building to transition its use to a Trade School program. We have already dedicated funding (and completed the work) to clean and power wash the interior and remove the surrounding mounds of soil from the exterior. We are engaged with an architect and in the process of creating the building's architectural and engineering design schematics. ESSER funding will also be used to fund a portion of this project.

4. Operations (Pillar #3), Compliance & Governance (Pillar#4)

Staff Retention

Describe teacher and administrator retention. Is the Academy operating with current staff shortages? Are there any incentives in place to retain current staff? Are there any other staff issues that are barriers to the educational environment?

Teacher retention has been a primary focus each of the last four years and has improved greatly. Upon arriving, TRG was faced with hiring nearly 80% of the staff. Three years later, we only lost 1 certified teacher as we transitioned from Spring 2020 to Fall 2020. This past summer, in a year many schools were struggling to stay fully staffed, we only lost 4 certified teachers. We have 14 teachers on campus who are enrolled in teaching programs and will be fully-certified in the near future. While we would hope to already have a fully-certified staff, this demonstrates a commitment to the career and Voyageur district. Some teacher-retention initiatives we have implemented include teacher retention bonuses, teacher certification scholarships, teacher achievement bonuses, and a large focus on staff appreciation throughout the year. There has been no administrative or dean-level turnover since we hired a new K-8 Principal 2.5 years ago. The administrative team is strong and fully-dedicated to the success of our students and district. These leaders are eligible for achievement bonuses, as well as receive other TRG bonuses and appreciation initiatives, throughout each year.

Board/ESP Relationship

What is the quality of the relationship between the Board and the Educational Service provider?

The working relationship between the ESP and Board has improved each year, since the beginning of the relationship in 2018. Clear communication processes are in place and the ESP has been responsive to requests made by the Board. Overall trust has increased in this relationship, as well. Both entities share the same vision for the district and are committed to seeing that vision come to fruition.

Strengths & Areas for Improvement

List the strengths of your current organizational (board, management company, building administration) leadership procedures and personnel. List areas for improvement in the organization.

Our current organizational leadership team continually demonstrates a commitment to the students of Voyageur Academy. The building administration is strong, dedicated, and works well with the ESP. All leaders are willing to do whatever it takes for the school to be successful, regardless of job title. Routine communication processes are in place between leaders, deans, and the ESP. Outside of providing support to our new Special Education Director, there are no areas of improvement or leadership issues that currently exist.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Stakeholder Involvement

List all academy team members who assisted with the completion of this document. Chairperson will sign to attest that all names gave input to the *Academy Internal Review* document.

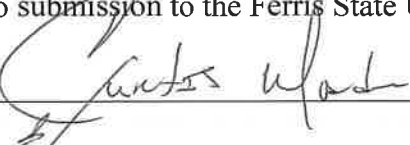
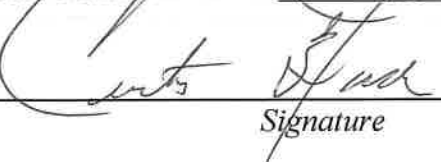
Pamara Sanders	-	High School Principal
Simone Gardner	-	K-8 Principal
Francois Herard	-	Special Education Director
Melissa Lopez	-	K-8 Dean of Instruction
Joseph Gagnon	-	High School Dean of Instruction
Angela Gilbert	-	ESP Representative
Vergil Smith	-	Superintendent/Chairperson

 _____ Chairperson Signature	<u>10-22-21</u> _____ Date
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Board of Directors Review

Date of Board Meeting Review 10-19-21

I attest that the full Board of Directors was given the opportunity to review the *Academy Internal Review* document prior to submission to the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office.

Board President Name:  _____  _____ Signature	<u>10/22/21</u> _____ Date
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