

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

Review Type: Reauthorization

Academy Name: Lighthouse Academy

Date(s): December 4 and 5, 2024

FINAL REPORT

The Review occurred at Lighthouse Academy with 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, Dr. Michele Siderman – 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, Governing Board members, teachers, and parents. The team was able to visit 16 classrooms to observe teaching and learning. 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 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	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PBIS is used consistently throughout every campus (as reported by both administration and staff), and they all use the responsible thinking process, however that will look different across different facilities. The residential or juvenile settings work collaboratively with their community partner on this. The goal being at all sites to keep the students in class as much as possible.• The programs that are within residential settings work to partner with the facility to support student behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue planning for common training around behavior management especially mental health in addition to traditional support.• Continue to work on building non-academic opportunities for students, especially at sites where student enrollment is for longer periods of time.• Continue de-escalation strategies, and diversity training as staff changes occur.• Continue to update mental health services, community partnerships, and inform staff of new resources.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff makes building relationships with students a priority. • Staff is fully aware of the trauma and past experiences they bring with them and keep this in mind when working with them in times of crisis. • Each site provides individualized instruction and uses evidence-based curriculum providing support and differentiation to students as needed. • The sites use a variety of assessments such as NWEA, Lexia and IXL to assist with screening students and supporting students. • The schools identify current support systems they have when enrolling to keep those supports involved in their educational experience. • The schools continue to work with and grow their community partnerships to expand the educational experience for their students. • Teachers report they use PBIS as their primary approach to behavior and work collaboratively with community partners if within a facility. The goal is to keep students in class as much as possible. • Teachers are very flexible with instruction in a classroom, especially at sites with a variety of subjects occurring at one time and/or multiple levels of English Language Learners. • There are weekly network meetings to discuss what is happening in the classrooms or with individual students to assist each other and best support their students. • The teachers through their answers are very committed to the mission and vision and values established in the district and are very dedicated to “their why”. • Teachers report that their school leaders are readily available to them and appreciate their support. • There is coaching from the school leaders to support teacher growth in the classroom. • Areas noted for improvement in the 2017 Reauthorization Review have been addressed and were clearly displayed in our visit. • Community partners report from a variety of sites and counties that their students are well cared for, the teachers do an outstanding job and meet students where they are. • Helping students academically and achieve graduation. • Use of technology and tools (ex. such as Edgenuity for earning credits toward graduation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue reading assessments and supports for newcomers in addition to WIDA screening. • Consider looking at students who might be in programming for extended periods of time, as a pull-out set of data using NWEA or standards-based grading or credit recovery (consider by site or similar student profile/program also). • Need for certified staff in areas such as Science to facilitate more hands-on learning. • Continue working to improve the PBIS and behavior support model at Eagle Village to incorporate the residency programs support and integration.
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Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency

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

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IES financial person meets with the school leaders once a month to review enrollment, staffing needs or possible changes, resource needs to assist with budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue sharing the decision making for funding and equity even in difficult times. • Possible federal grant opportunities, aside from IA, ID, maybe IC, III immigrant, ML. • Continue to be aware of legislation that potentially could impact enrollment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district works collaboratively using their values to drive financial decisions, especially during difficult times. 	
Pillar #3: Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting needs of staff by hiring great teammates. • IES is very intentional with their hiring process. This includes growing individuals from within. • IES conducts multiple "stay" surveys with staff to help them understand why staff is remaining at Lighthouse and uses that to drive their decision making and influences their hiring processes. • The district provides an aspiring leader series to grow staff. • The district implements a value recognition program that allows the staff to celebrate each other. • All documents and data are cross walked well between different sets of expectations (ex. Ferris, MICIP, Cognia). • It is evident all stakeholders are aware, believe and live the mission, vision, and school improvement processes for the betterment of the organization and as a result students benefit. • Accreditation with Cognia and establishing seamless programming and processes. • Community partners report consistent and positive communication and meetings with school staff at their sites. • Community partners reporting a variety of support provided by Lighthouse as a strength (ex. special ed services, SW, Speech, RTI, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on and implement a strong onboarding process for new staff. • Continue team building activities any supports for staff. • Keep surveys and reviewing information "stay" and "exit." • Continue retention and recruitment efforts. • Peer to Peer mentoring if possible. • Continue tracking and feeding why/vision/mission. • Continue to follow processes in place for the Lighthouse mission, when considering adding programming. • Encourage development of succession plan for leadership. • Community partners report interest in potentially pursuing some career tech opportunities for their students.
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board has a presentation at every board meeting from a school site or group of schools which highlights academic progress, behavior progress, and any other highlights. • The strategic plan is reviewed with the board on a quarterly basis to show growth based on data points. • Diverse Board experience and skills to support the unique needs of the school and its' mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue strategic planning and looking for all stakeholders to have input/shared vision/alignment of goals with MICIP. • Ensure Board has succession plan. • Continued involvement in growth planning.

- Board functions independently from school leadership, management company, and provides appropriate oversight and supports.
- The board reports a high level of trust with IES and the financial reporting and budgeting.
- The board reports an appreciation for the open and honest presentations in all areas, including student academic achievement, student behavior, financial planning, and operations.

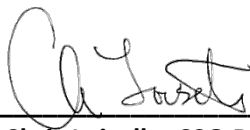
Contract Performance Report(s) Review and Financial Scorecard

Pillar	Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
Pillar #1: Academic Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not available prior to the 2024-2025 school year. Newly designed academic support indicators will be tracked starting in 24-25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not available prior to the 2024-2025 school year.
Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing enrollment. • Strong fund balance. • Meets all fiscal indicators. 	
Pillar #3: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets most operations indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School safety evaluations are reported 'Approaching' expectations.
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeds most compliance indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual board self-evaluation. • Fill vacancy on the Board of Directors.

Signed



Jim Scholten, CSO Review Chair



Chris Loiselle, CSO Director